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Pheneticism As A Cultural And Literary Critique Of Human Interaction

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Graduate Program in Theory and Criticism
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Abstract

In 2010, Wayde Compton proposed, as an experiment, replacing the term ‘passing’ with ‘pheneticizing’ in relation to critical race theory and in conjunction with the manner in which we interpret the relationship racialized subjects possess with agents of the state. Pheneticizing, co-opted as a theoretical term from the branch of taxonomy called phenetics, when it comes to human interaction, has been demonstrated from a Eurocentric position of power from the time of European colonial expansion; through the era of the African slave trade of Europe and the Americas; into the time of American reconstruction; and persists within our current reality. In the expansion of this theory, this paper gives consideration to William Wilberforce’s attempt to restructure the labour force of a capitalist market; Louis Althusser’s position on Marxist-Leninist structure and the subjectified relationships to both the ideological and repressive state apparatuses; and the role of the subject within interpellation as the subjectified ‘other’ by those in positions of power. In addition to a historical and theoretical look at pheneticizing as a practice of human interaction, this paper considers the presence of pheneticization within the works of both black and white authors, typically considered as ‘passing’ literature. These works, stretching from Twain in the 19th century to Senna in the late 20th century, take on greater depth within the new theoretical diagnostic of pheneticizing, further illustrating the relationship between the pheneticized subject in his relationship to elite capitalist power structures and the need for a reproducing labour force in order for those structure to survive.

Epigraph

The Other Side of the Looking Glass (An Ode to Modern America)

Wash the smog from your eyes, the exhaustion,
the accumulation of years
and examine yourself closely

your teeth are perfect plastic
your hair is someone else's
your skin is pulled and stitched
your face is stretched young
your smile is permanent

Now look closer Look into the eyes
examine them thoroughly

your family dies or disappears
your friends are enemies
your lovers are sick
your children are strangers
your home is some apartment
your education means nothing
your work even less
your body is a commodity
your wars are big business
your leader is a rich politician
your preacher is god
your god is forsaken
your memory is gone
your luck is finished
your days are numbered
your legacy is a plea
for forgiveness

~Armand Garnett Ruffo

Dedication

I dedicate this work, first and foremost, to my wife, Carla, who has borne the burden of this journey more than I. I am nothing without your partnership.

It is further dedicated to my children, Mitchel and Makela. Together, you form the driving force in my life—the only motivation I will ever need.

Finally, this work is dedicated to the institution of Huron University College and the five professors there who believed in me enough that I was finally able to believe in myself. To Doctors Neil Brooks, Corinne Davies, Peter Hyland, Dermot McCarthy, and John Vanderheide: you each are an honour to the academy and a gift in my life. You have my full respect and admiration.

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First, I thank Wayde Compton and Shane Book, without whom this work would not exist. You have been generous and encouraging, and I am grateful for your thoughts and contributions that have allowed me to pursue this discourse. While some might suggest that there is a certain absurdity in my choosing to extend your thoughts, in that I have never had the experience of being pheneticized in any way, I appreciate that you have fully embraced me as an ally in the stand against injustice. If we are absurd, we are absurd together. I view this thesis merely as a contribution to a conversation that began with the two of you, and hope that in my participating in that conversation, others might take up the topic, thus forcing more honesty into the light of our collective consciousness... or better yet, our collective conscience.

Second, I wish to thank the faculty and students of the Centre for Theory and Criticism at Western University. Many of you stretched my thinking every day that we were together. I am truly grateful for an environment that pushes us to consider many angles to the same topic. It was my honour to study with you.

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Preface

It is the aim of this paper to demonstrate that, not only does racially-based pheneticism occur within human interaction, it is an interpellation which is embedded into the structure of our society, thus relegating the person of colour (or perceived colour) to a weakened position within the structure. It is the author's hope that in the presentation of pheneticism as an active element within human interaction and discrimination, the reader might consider the ideologies which lead to pheneticizing the subjectified 'other.'

CHAPTER 1: Pheneticism Within The History of Science and Societies

1.1 Introduction

Phenetic classification is an outdated form of biological taxonomy, used briefly during the early stages of European colonization to quickly identify flora and fauna based only upon the observation of appearance and surrounding context. Though the argument for phenetic taxonomy, and the “admissability of certain modes of reasoning in taxonomy as a science” (Van Der Steen and Bootje 57), continued into the late 20th century, microbiology and genetic understanding has all but eliminated phenetics as an “aberration” (Briggs, 24) rather than a scientific revolution which is “equally effective [to phylogenetics] at all levels” (Steussy, 51). Phenetics, an observation-based taxonomy that attempts to identify common character traits through observation of appearance within context is now largely viewed as a scientific method which does not “provide reliable evidence... nor form a sound basis for classification” (Quicke, 13). Phyletics, which relies heavily on measurement, analysis, and data comparison in search of clades or common ancestry, has been widely accepted as an accurate method of taxonomy since Darwin.

Phenetics, due to its lack of scientific grounding, gave way to phyletics, and later phylogenetics, both based in measurement, comparison, and data. So how does phenetic theory now get applied as a criticism of human interaction? In terms of biological taxonomy, phenetic classification has been replaced and is outdated. However, within the context of human social interaction, I would posit that pheneticism is an active, sometimes subconscious reality within Western culture which is related to both structuralism and interpellation. Based on what is seen

in terms of skin colour, perceived cultural markers, and clothing, and the context in which these things are seen, humans make judgements of other humans as the subjected 'other' without allowing the subject being objectified to self-identify. In fact, pheneticism is often a state-sanctioned, intentional action by police and military, upheld as essential to public security.

Wayde Compton,¹ in his essay "Pheneticizing Versus Passing" (2010) is the original co-opter of the term 'pheneticizing' as a replacement for 'passing' in certain circumstances. He suggests the definition of "racially perceiving someone based on a subjective examination of his or her outward appearance," sits in contrast to passing, the more widely applied term within critical race theory, which Compton argues requires a deliberate deception on the part of the subject being identified (25).

The concept of racial 'passing' is directly tied to the "American 'one-drop rule,' the historical policy of segregation that defined as black those who had *any* degree of known African ancestry" (Compton 20). Those who "decided to defy this definition" could only evade the denotation by "lying about their family background or omitting mention of any black ancestors" (Compton 21). This practice became known as 'passing.' The term 'passing', however, has since "been expanded to encompass any kind of racial transposition, whether deliberate or not" (Compton 21). This is where phenetic theory, or pheneticism, has its role. Compton challenges the notion that a person who offers no deception and whose racial identity is assigned by another, is 'passing.' He asserts that to apply 'passing' in this fashion "illogically implies that what the viewer sees is the responsibility of the person being seen" (21-22). Borrowing from the field of

¹ Wayde Compton is a Canadian poet, the co-founder of Vancouver's Hogan's Alley Memorial Project, and the Associate Director of Creative Writing at Simon Fraser University. Although the term used in this context originates with him and his essay, Wayde has expressed no desire to extend the idea beyond his original essay. Mr. Compton has given his blessing and assistance to my extension of his work.

biological taxonomy in which phenetics “assigns biological classification based on outward appearance to the eye” (24), Compton applies the term ‘pheneticizing’ to signify the act of assigning racial identity to an individual based solely on what is seen and how what is seen is interpreted by the viewer in situations where the individual being viewed offers no data or deception to aid in that racial classification. As we will see in the second chapter, the one-drop rule and the positioning of black as a separated race is directly tied to the class-based structural need for a reproducing proletariat. That in turn, requires that agents of the state actively pheneticize subjects in order to uphold the dominant ruling ideology of a race-based working class.

Compton, using four specific case studies, beautifully illustrates how the intermingling of cultures into what are commonly known as biracial subjects, stands in stark contrast to the Jim Crow² ideology of race, except when those holding to such ideologies, or expounding upon them as agents of the given social structure, objectify biracial subjects into racialized groups to which they would not be assigned through either their own view or bio-genetic ancestry. However, having said that, to add the term ‘pheneticizing’ to the vernacular of critical (race) theory is not without its difficulties.

1.2 Pheneticism Within The History of Science

“Yet it would seem that the diversities of cultures has seldom been recognized by men for what it is—a natural phenomenon resulting from the direct or indirect contacts between societies; men have tended rather to regard diversity as something abnormal or outrageous; advances in our

² Jim Crow Laws were those laws enacted in America between the time of reconstruction (1877) and the start of the civil rights movement (1950s) which enforced racial segregation and discrimination.

knowledge of these matters served less to destroy the illusion and replace it by a more accurate picture than to make us accept it or accommodate ourselves to it.” (Levi-Strauss 12)

The concept of race, scientifically speaking, has long been exposed as false. Genetic study does not allow for the suggestion that *homo sapiens* is divided into a series of sub-races, each distinct from the next. Rather, we are of one common stock, divided into a series of cultures or ethnicities with distinct appearances and practices, but common nonetheless. As these people groups intermingle and cross-procreate, genetic sharing occurs across cultures, further destroying the notion of race, or a small series of races which are comfortably denoted. Ashley Montagu stated in 1965, we now understand that “*Homo sapiens* evolved only once, and that the different so-called ‘races’ simply represent the adaptive responses to the different challenges of the environments in which these peoples or so-called ‘races’ originating from a common stock found themselves” (Montagu 51). This falsity of the idea of race, therefore, brings the necessity of pheneticism into question. In the application of phenetic theory, arguing that the subjective assignment of race is an active practice in Western culture, is there not the suggestion that race, as a concept, exists? In asserting that there are a variety of races to which one can be assigned by an objectifier, do we not first acquiesce to the false notion of race?

While anthropological and other scientific study assert race as a false concept, that does not preclude race, as a notion of human construct, from affecting cultural interaction. Toni Morrison suggests that race as critical theory is “complicated by the fact that the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture” (Morrison 9). As Compton suggests, race is not a progression from black to white, but is instead a circle of

transgressive experiences in which one identity collapses into another” (26). In this regard, the notion of delineated and easily identifiable race is mythological at best, and oppressive at its worst. However, since, culturally speaking, race and racism are an active component of our daily interaction that cannot and should not be ignored, and a state-led pheneticism of race-based fear affects both the objectifier and the subject being pheneticized exists, phenetic theory allows us to shift the onus from the subject to the structure, broadening our understanding of the position in which the racialized subject finds themselves.

Not surprisingly, some of the earliest recorded occurrences of pheneticism come from colonial expansion, when European explorers’ sense of superiority coupled with their desire for fame and fortune, promoted the idea of objective labeling for each new plant, animal, and human tribe encountered.

1.3 The Example of Columbus

In 1492, Christopher Columbus, believing he was on his way to India³ based on the erroneous cartography of Italian mathematician and astronomer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli (Appendix 1), sailed west towards what he believed to be the Indies in search of a passage to wealth that would not need to utilize the silk road through the Ottoman empire. Most have heard some variation of the story and we know that the people ‘discovered’ by Columbus were misidentified—or pheneticized—as Indian, but despite understanding Columbus’ early mistake, the word ‘Indian’ is still prevalent in our place names, governmental departments, and language. In our own present day, when the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island struggle for the recognition and rights of their individual nations, Columbus’ example clearly illustrates how long-lasting the

³ This would not be India as we know it today. Much of southeast Asia at the time was known as India or the Indies, and the inhabitants there, Indians.

effects of pheneticism can be. Columbus himself, in his later letters, seemed to be confused as to whether he was in Asia or on a new continent—he mentioned both possibilities—and certainly within a generation all explorers understood the western colonized lands to be the Americas and a New World. Yet, the label “Indian” is still in use by officials, governments, sports teams, and many, many civilians—including some from within indigenous people groups—thus robbing native peoples of their proper names, and beginning the process of homogenizing many indigenous nations into one, misidentified unit.

Columbus’ scientific use (and I would argue that, even if unintentional, his journey of discovery was as scientific at the time as it was geographic or political) of phenetic labelling carried through to the time of Darwin. The social and cultural impact of that use extends even further, and can be found haunting the thoughts of even Darwin, who ostensibly rejected phenetics in his publications.

1.4 The Example of Darwin

Darwin, like his contemporaries including Alfred Russel Wallace, Charles Lyell, and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, was a phyleticist in almost all aspects of his work. He meticulously measured, dissected, compared, sketched, and recorded his findings as he circled the world on the SS Beagle cataloguing flora and fauna. However, within his own journal writings on that trip we discover that, while he applied phyletic analysis to the plants and animals, he regressed to phenetic analysis in his initial interactions with human communities, basing his claims of the ‘uncivilized savage’ on immediate observations.

On Monday, January 16, 1831, Darwin wrote that he witnessed “lying together goats, pigs & black & brown children: some of whom boast of a shirt, but quite as many not” who he

suggested “*look* less like human beings than I could have fancied any degradation could have produced” (C. Darwin 1, 24-25, emphasis added). The *SS Beagle* had arrived in Jago that day at about 3:00 PM. These observations of the local children came after meeting with the community’s “Governador” in a “house which is not suited to the grandeur of his title” (C. Darwin 1, 24). Charles Darwin’s assessment of the people as ‘degraded’ is based on no more than phenetic observation. He notes the colour of their skin, the condition of their clothing, and the context of lying with animals, and asserts that these are a lesser form of human. The text makes no note of the scientist having measured the children in any way. The only comments are anecdotally-based observations. Later in the text he writes, “it has been for me a glorious day, like giving to a blind man eyes” (C. Darwin 1, 25).

As Darwin comes in contact with more humans in more communities, his phenetic analysis continues. On September 15, Darwin writes, “as for the woman, she was perfectly nondescript; she dressed & rode like a man, & till dinner I did not *guess* she was otherwise” (C. Darwin 1, 93, emphasis added). On December 18, based solely on the “spectacle” of behaviour of those who welcomed the group ashore, he claims he “would not have believed how entire the difference between savage and civilized man is. It is greater than between a wild and domesticated animal” (C. Darwin 1, 109). Darwin bases this assertion on his beliefs that “their language does not deserve to be called articulate” (C. Darwin 1, 110); “their dress and *appearance* is miserable [and] their manner of living is still more so” (C. Darwin 1, 110, emphasis added); and that their greeting included “three hard slaps on the breast & back” (C. Darwin 1, 110). From these observations and without a noted measuring of any kind, Darwin is

able to assert that “if the world were searched, no lower grade of man could be found” (C. Darwin 1, 111).

These misguided observations should not surprise us in any way. In the same year Columbus sailed under Ferdinand and Isabella’s money, the two were ousting 350,000 Jews and Muslims from Spain in an attempt to ‘purify the blood’ of the Spanish people. The idea that humanity was broken into races or subspecies was a long-held belief before Columbus sailed and was firmly entrenched in the general narrative by Darwin’s time, thus influencing his initial interactions. Further, these value judgements based on phenetic observation are certainly influenced by a capitalist-driven structure found within the colonial slave trade of the era and the already prominent ideology that the southern continents held an uncivilized savage not equal in any way to the ‘civilized’ populations of Europe. However, as a scientist employing methods of phyletic analysis for the plant and animal kingdoms, Darwin’s choice to pheneticize within that ideology rather than analyze his fellow human could only lead to further racially-charged prejudice against those being labelled. This choice, which went against his own belief that “the importance, for classification, of trifling characters, mainly depends on their being correlated to other characters of more or less importance” (C. Darwin 2, 417) resulted in a strong belief that the labelled savages were lower on the evolutionary ladder than their European counterparts. Darwin’s commitment to phyletics, as noted in *The Origin of the Species*, was not afforded to his human subjects during his initial observations.

Forty years after the voyage on the *SS Beagle*, Darwin was asking himself some of the same questions which arise from the debate between phyletic analysis and phenetic observation when it comes to the human species. Rather than resting on mere phenetics, the researcher and

theorist had moved scientifically to the necessary questions that place human taxonomy within phyletic analysis. Darwin notes:

It might also naturally be enquired whether man, like so many other animals, has given rise to varieties and sub-races, differing but slightly from each other, or to races differing so much that they must be classed as doubtful species? (C. Darwin 3, 9-10)

In attempting to answer this question, Darwin shifts from phenetic observation to phyletic measurement, considering three main ideas: “*The Bodily Structure of Man*,” “*Embryonic Development*,” and “*Rudiments*,” the same methodology he employed with the “marsupial koala,” (C. Darwin 3, 27) which phenetic taxonomy had, in previous generations, erroneously labeled a bear. But the damage from his earlier work was already done. The damage of phenetic labelling was already in place. Despite Darwin’s theory of evolution angering the church in its assertions, religious people who had long since held the belief that superiority over another indicated God’s blessing, adopted and adapted some of Darwin’s earlier statements and ideas which allowed them to view the dark-skinned conquered people of other continents as being closer to the animal kingdom, a subspecies of human that could and should be subdued for the sole purposes and whim of the conqueror or purchaser, which is not necessarily an attitude that should be attributed to Darwin.

In *The Origin of The Species*, Darwin argued that, based on “that most important function, the reproduction of the species,” all humans are of one common type (C. Darwin 3, 17). A manipulation of this work when added to his earlier observations, pre-existing cultural biases, and the work of his contemporaries, was used to compound the deeply held prejudices of the

political power structure. It could be argued that, had Darwin the tools micro-biologists employ today, he would have deduced even more commonality between the variations of human than he would have found differences, but the phenetic statements he made in his early journals have been used to subjugate people of colour to an unofficial, and all-too-often official, classification as lower human found within a subspecies.

In *Biology and the Social Crisis*, Brierley argues that the “four stocks” (84) of race found within the “Pinks, Blacks, Browns, and Yellows” (83) of humanity are more obvious in the “extremes [of] China or West Africa, or Sweden” (83) and that, should one survey all of humanity in all places, one would discover that “racial distinctions shade into one another and are lost through intermarriage” (83), or the racial “transgressions” that Compton notes (26), in which “one race collapses into another” (26). The fact that humans can so easily procreate across the idea of race is a strong indicator that there is but one species with multiple variations, not a species and subspecies as Darwin originally suggested in his journals. With rare exceptions, such as the horse and donkey, interspecies breeding is not possible. Within his section on embryonic development, Darwin notes that the similarities found within this development place humans “nearer to the apes than the apes are to the dog” (Darwin 3, 17). If that is true, and the separation of humans from apes, and more so from dogs is predicated upon the manner in which offspring develop in the womb, the extension of that argument, widely accepted now by geneticists, but not by scientists during Darwin’s life, is that all humans, based on “that most important function, the reproduction of the species” (Darwin 3, 13) are of one common type. Darwin concludes Part I of *The Descent of Man* by stating:

It can further be shewn that the differences between the races of man, as in colour, hairy-ness, form of features, &c., are of the nature which it might have been expected would have been acted on by sexual selection.

(Darwin 2, 250)

1.5 Non-Pheneticizing Cultures In The Ancient Near East

Some might argue that pheneticizing is merely an inherent heuristic⁴, transmitted through our DNA as a precautionary safeguard against danger presented in the different-appearing other, rather than a learned bias stemming from Western culture, but history does not validate that argument as reality. An interesting historical example of a culture with no discernible pheneticizing practice can be found approximately 2600 years ago in the ancient Babylonian civilization. Textual evidence is found in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), or Christian Old Testament, in The Book of Daniel's narrative regarding the sacking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon and his disposal of Jehoiakim the King of Judah. After its conquest, Judah became a vassal state to Babylon, paying tribute to their new ruler. However, the best and the brightest young Jewish men were taken back to Babylon to serve in the King's temple.

These young men, accordingly, were "children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace" (Daniel 1:4 KJV). According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, the word 'blemish' here is translated from the Hebrew קָאוּם or

⁴ An argument originally presented to me in conversation with James Shelley.

mum (moom 3971⁵). It literally means stain, but the term is used in both Deuteronomy and Leviticus to describe physical deformities and defects in livestock. In Leviticus 19, *mum* is translated as a permanent injury one man bestows upon another. It is not merely a case of acne or a small scar, but rather a permanent disfigurement of serious proportion. Nebuchadnezzar was certain that he did not want to bring deformity into his kingdom.

The term “well favoured” should also be considered more closely. A better translation would be ‘handsome’ or ‘beautiful.’ The Hebrew word used in Daniel is מְרֹאֶה or *mar’eh* (2896). In the twenty-three uses of *mar’eh* in the Tanakh, each refers to one who is nice to look at both in form and face. These were not simply well-liked young men, but moreover, they were beautiful, strong, athletic young men. They had attractive faces and bodies, which resulted in their favour. These were the Ryan Goslings of their time, fit in both face and form.

Finally, the term “cunning in knowledge” must be considered within its context. Cunning is translated from יָדָע or *yada*: to know (3045). Knowledge, in this context, is from the Hebrew דָּאָת or *da’ath* (4093). Both speak to an extraordinary awareness to which some assign mystic qualities and all understand to mean a deep, intimate knowledge. In Genesis 4, *yada* describes the manner in which Adam knew Eve through sexual relations. In Genesis 25, it is used to describe the great hunter Esau’s intimate understanding of his prey. Throughout the Tanakh, *da’ath* is translated as perception, discernment, wisdom, and prophetic understanding. Together, *yada da’ath* is the intense and deep understanding possessed by a king’s wise men. These young men, taken from Israel by Nebuchadnezzar, were good looking, without physical deformity of any kind, and they held a wisdom well beyond that of their peers who were left behind.

⁵ Strong’s employs a numerical cross-referencing system specific to this work.

Daniel 1:3 also tells us that these young men were of the noble class, of the “King's seed, and of the princes.” As they were placed under the care of “Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs,” some have argued that the Hebrew slaves were castrated as eunuch trophies to Nebuchadnezzar. While it is entirely possible that Nebuchadnezzar may have wished to deplete the strength of Israel through the destruction of its royal lineage, it is more likely that he intended to bring that seed into his own kingdom for the purpose of strengthening his own royal lines. There are four key pieces of evidence that lead to this conclusion.

The word “seed” is a translation of זֶרַע or *zera* (2234), which often indicates offspring, as it does in this case. *Zera* is the most commonly used form of the word seed in Hebrew scripture. It can be translated properly as an actual seed of vegetation (Leviticus 27:16), or refer to the virility of human semen (Numbers 5:28), or to the descendants of Abraham (Isaiah 41:8). It is always, however, used in a positive, reproductive sense. Had the author intended the idea of one separated, destroyed, or rotten, it is more likely the word פְּרִדּוֹת or *perudah* (6507) would have been chosen. This other, rarely used form of ‘seed’ would carry the necessary connotation of something to be cut off.

Second, had Nebuchadnezzar desired to end the lineage of the Hebrew King Jehoiakim, he would not have installed Jeconiah, Jehoiakim’s son, in his place on the throne of his new vassal state. That act alone indicates a respect for Judah’s royal family and a desire for a strong nation which could continue to forward rich tributes to Babylon.

Third, if the Tanakh is to be used as a historical source, some of these young men, particularly Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were given roles of high authority in the Babylonian empire, not unheard of for a royal slave in the time period, but highly unlikely for a

eunuch. Eunuchs of the castrated type most often worked in close relation to women of the court, making their castration a decision of purpose, not punishment.

Finally, should we accept the 17th century teachings of theologian Gerardus Vossius, the term eunuch evolved to refer to a castrated or celibate man (Lodewijk and Daniel Elsevir, 198) According to Vossius, the term originally referred to a position of power, much in the way it is likely used in Daniel 1 (Lodewijk and Daniel Elsevir, 198). The word in the passage in question, taken from the Hebrew סָרִיס or çârîyç and pronounced *saris* (5631), translates literally as ‘official’ and does not have a sexual connotation. It is derived from רַב־סָרִיס, or Rab-Çârîyç (7249), which denotes a chief official, specifically in reference to Babylon. The similar Hebrew word סָרִס, or çârîç, which is also pronounced *saris* (5631), has the Greek equivalent εὐνουχίζω (2135) or eunouchizo and it is from eunouchizo that we take the English word eunuch. While סָרִס does refer to a neutered or celibate man, it is not the form of *saris* (çârîyç) used in Daniel 1.

The text, in its original form, gives little reason to believe that Nebuchadnezzar wanted castrated trophies in order to end the line of Judah’s Kingdom. Delineation not being the goal, it is a realistic assumption that the desire to bring only the healthiest, most handsome, wisest, most virile, unblemished, young men without deficits of any kind was a strategy to increase the genealogical strength of Nebuchadnezzar’s own kingdom through an ancient form of eugenic manipulation. Ancient Babylon did not possess a heuristic that called for a separation of the subjected other, but rather a designed and celebrated intermingling. The ideology of the day was to increase the power found within the structure through the cross-breeding and intermarrying of the strongest individuals found within different people groups. This argument is strengthened through the process of assimilation which began immediately after the young men arrived in

Babylon. The Tanakh tells us that these young men were given the best “daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years” (Daniel 1:5 KJV) for his service. Simultaneous to this, each was assigned a new Babylonian name, thus attempting to erase their Jewish past while bringing them into the Babylonian empire as wise men and breeding stock who would serve the King.

This being true, a strong argument can be made for ancient states having a willingness to assimilate with other nations, cultures and races, not fear them. The argument that there is an inherent prejudice within human evolution designed to protect us from those who appear different to our own perceptions of normal is thus refuted by history. The ancients did not see, nor adhere to ideas of race, but rather strengthened their own empires through selective cross-breeding of mixed ethnicity without fear. The modern proclivity towards racially-based prejudice is a direct response to mindsets of superiority first located in a European colonial world, now upheld by the state, enforced by agents of the state, and propagated through media largely controlled by the state. This is not an ancient tradition. Pheneticism is an active response to the construct of race, designed to uphold the structures of power for the mostly Eurocentric, postcolonial rulers who still wield such power through the mechanisms and apparatuses of state-funded control.

1.6 A Brief History of Blood

This example from ancient Babylonia, however, does not refute the fact that some cultures, as far back as the ancient Greeks and Romans, saw blood and the preservation of bloodlines as a necessity to preserving and increasing the power structure of a people group.

Certainly, the custom of preserving pure bloodlines was not new to the African slave trade and the prejudiced America which followed.

In 400 BCE, Hippocrates “theorized that personality and health were determined by the presence and balance of the four humours” (Hill 148). In *The Nature of Man*, he said, “The body of man has in itself blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile; these make up the nature of his body, and through these he feels pain and enjoys health. Now he enjoys the most perfect health when these elements are duly proportioned to another in respect of compounding, power and bulk, and when they are perfectly mingled” (as quoted by Hill, 148). Living in a culture with this teaching and one in which strong kings, such as Philip II, begat stronger kings, such as Alexander III of Macedonia, and champion athletes such as Diagoras of Rhodes produced sons and grandsons of equal and greater strength than he himself possessed, there is little wonder as to why those in the power structure of Greece and later those in power when Rome conquered Greece, were determined to pair nobility in marriage. In fact, after the fall of the Roman Republic, Julius Caesar’s three wives all came from nobility, which likely had as much to do with preserving a healthy bloodline as it did political consolidation.

A little more than 200 years after Julius Caesar’s reign, blood had become the most important human trait for preserving power. As Lawrence Hill writes, the philosopher and physician Galen argued:

the preponderance of one particular humour determined a person’s basic personality type. Blood was thought to accelerate the spirit, and thus we have come to employ the word *sanguine* to describe a fundamentally optimistic people. If you are a positive person, Galen led us to believe, it’s

because it is in your blood. It is not a huge leap to assume that talent, and God-given rights to lead or inspire, might also reside in the blood (148).

With this philosophy in place and the obvious transference of genetic stature and athletic ability from one generation to another, attitudes and ideas for not only preserving, but strengthening positions of power through selective breeding became the norm. In the post-slavery south, the white position of power could only be preserved through pure-blood breeding. Segregated marriages, miscegenation laws, and pheneticism under Jim Crow were seen as the means to ensure white power.

1.7 Eugenics: An Extension of State-Sponsored Purification

Why, I said, the principle has been already laid down that the best of either sex should be united with the best as often, and the inferior with the inferior, as seldom as possible; and that they should rear the offspring of the one sort of union, but not of the other, if the flock is to be maintained in first-rate condition. (Plato 380 BCE, Book V)

Whether one views Plato's *Republic* as satire, regards it as cultural criticism, or accepts it as an actual guidebook towards an idealized society, the reader must accept that, on some level, notions of selective breeding were part of the discourse during Plato's time, even if he were the originator of the idea in Greek culture. That, however, is unlikely. Selective breeding, as noted, can be traced as far back as Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.

Throughout recorded human history, ideas of beauty, strength, and strong bloodlines have dominated the self-preserving minds of people in power. Whether it is the alt-right's celebration of Donald Trump in a belief that they can restore America to something it has never been—a

white man's empire void of coloured subjects; the near inbreeding of remaining royal families to preserve their royal bloodlines; the systematic and since vilified scientific programs of Hitler's Germany; or the desire of ancient emperors to strengthen their family's position on the throne through eugenic reproduction; those in power have long held a desire to increase the strength of one bloodline while simultaneously depleting the strength of another for the purposes of preservation and power. In America, the ideal has been—and is being—played out through ideals of racial superiority versus racial inferiority and the belief that, despite DNA records suggesting the contrary, the white race is a real, more than a concept, and that it can and should be preserved.

The ideas of Plato's Socrates were not new when they were written, and they are far from new now, at a time when scientists are actualizing the power and ability to manipulate genes for the purported strengthening of the human animal as the dominant species on our planet. What Plato describes as a desire for "men... to be the guardians and watchdogs of the herd" so that "the birth and education of our women [will] be subject to similar or nearly similar regulations; then we shall see whether the result accords with our design" (Plato 380 BCE, Book V). Plato described his idealized republic as one that utilizes selective breeding to strengthen the populace.

The Socrates of the text suggests openly that "those women who have such qualities are to be selected as the companions and colleagues of men who have similar qualities and whom they resemble in capacity and in character" and that "having selected the men, will now select the women and give them to them" so that these couples of "like natures... will be drawn by a necessity of their natures to have intercourse with each other" (Plato 380 BCE, Book V). It is an advocacy for eugenic strengthening of the species, but a closer reading also suggests that it is a

specific argument for strengthening a single republic of power. This, as we will discuss in the second chapter, is structuralism: ideologies held and disseminated by those in power for the purposes of maintaining and strengthening that position.

In America, particularly the south, and parts of the Caribbean, these ideologies have been viewed through the lens of race and ‘qualities to be selected’ have included pale skin tones, Euro-ethnic features, and straight hair. Essentially, any physical quality that does not resemble an African heritage. While it is somewhat more palatable to suggest that these attitudes of racial superiority and segregation were by-and-large confined to the southern states of America, that is far from reality. In 1911, British physician Havelock Ellis wrote about a family who “three centuries ago... were highly respectable people living in a Swiss valley” who “intermarried with an insane stock and subsequently intermarried with other women of an unbalanced nature” (Ellis 39-40). After a study of 310 family members it was determined that “vagrancy, feeble-mindedness, mental troubles, criminality, pauperism, [and] immorality are... their patrimony” (ibid). Ellis’ attitudes towards these conditions can be summed up in his attitude toward “feeble-mindedness,” which he saw as “an absolute dead weight on the race... an evil that is unmitigated” (ibid). The “heavy and complicated social burdens and injuries it inflicts on the present generation are without compensation” while the fact that it is “highly inheritable renders it a deteriorating poison to the race” (Ellis 41).

Ellis’ arguments for eugenics to strengthen the societal stock are based on a decrease in death rate, disease rate, and the rate of misery which would result in “an immense savings not only in money but in human happiness and social effort” (Ellis 57). In a program to “regenerate the race” and to be “reasonably sure that we are likely to produce fit children” (Ellis 58), Ellis

advocated for the eugenic “higher breeding of the race” (Ellis 56) and the “breeding out, so far as possible, of the feeble-minded” (Ellis 61) in an effort to “bring a little nearer that vision of Paradise” (Ellis 67). Again, buoyed by a belief that God desires a purified form of human, that the higher human form can be achieved through selective breeding, and that the perfected human is a white person of European descent, this leading thinker of his time advocates for the restricted breeding of those considered ‘other’ and the selective breeding of those who can regenerate the race to a superior form. This, however, is counterproductive to the structure, as we will see in Chapter 2, as this type of upward breeding fails to reproduce the proletariat required to maintain the structures of power within a capitalist market.

In 1926, with the proliferation of eugenic thought crossing Europe, Leonard Darwin, son of Charles, wrote *The Need for Eugenic Reform*. While not opposed to the ideas of eugenics, the younger Darwin took a more placid approach to the subject, suggesting that “the first question to be asked is—In what ways can this generation affect future generations for good or for evil?” (L. Darwin 73). His five heading framework, however, includes “Environmental inheritance; Pre-natal environment; *Racial poisons*; and the Inheritance of acquired differences,” as well as “Selection, or the relative increase in the numbers of persons to be born in the future of good stock and therefore likely to be endowed with good inborn qualities” (L. Darwin 73-74 emphasis added). In the years stretching between the US Civil War and World War II, ideas of racial separation and even “racial poisons” were not held only by capitalists, but also by scientists who wished to take control of the evolutionary process to increase the quality of human breeding. Prejudicial attitudes of segregation were not isolated to the South, but were widespread across the western world.

Within his approach, Leonard Darwin argues that the mixing of race with “inferior strains” could “produce a race of individuals all as good as the superior type or to debase the whole down to the level of the lowest” (L. Darwin 121). This is problematic for several reasons: First, it asserts that there are different races amongst humans, a claim his father’s work did not necessarily support and a claim that has now been more than debunked. Second, it makes claim to both superior and inferior races within that context, an argument based in social structuralism, not scientific data. Third, even though he acknowledges at the time of writing that “we are still almost entirely ignorant of the processes,” he still argues that his “statement of truth” that interracial breeding could result in the entire species being debased, will “be endorsed by... experts” working in the field (L. Darwin 121).

Claude Levi-Strauss said in 1958 that “there is no justification for asserting that any one race is intellectually superior or inferior to another” (Levi-Strauss, 7). It is only genetic selection over time and physical location that separates one people group from another, not into races but cultures. The argument for the preservation of a non-existent superiority through the supposed altruistic suppression of those deemed inferior, clearly fueled the eugenic discourse of the early 20th century and continues to influence thought today, despite the foundational belief of multiple races having been disproven.

American zoologist and eugenicist, S.J. Holmes, in his 1933 work *Eugenic Predicament*, focuses more on class structure, and rarely refers to notions of race, though it could be argued, based on the time of writing, that the inference of race within the class structure of the time is understood. His argument is predicated on the belief that the decrease in birth rates, particularly amongst upper class Europeans, “is one of the most important biological events that has occurred

in the recent evolution of our species” (Holmes 84). Holmes’ underlying argument is that while the uneducated, lesser classes of society continued to procreate at high rates, the educated, wealthy, well-bred citizens of European nations bred at a rate of 1.88, thus decreasing the quality stock in the gene pool.

What is most interesting from this pre-WWII work is that Holmes argues for both negative and positive eugenics, including forced “sterilization [where it] is justified on eugenic grounds,” and that “these should include the sterilization of high-grade morons and other undesirable kinds of parents” (Holmes 164). He goes on to suggest that “physicians should be free to proceed at their own discretion” (Holmes 164) without oversight, an idea of great danger when applied to areas of deeply held prejudice, such as the southern American states. The author bases his ideas for negative eugenics “as a means of race improvement... the elimination of bad heredity and the lightening of some of the burdens for which bad heredity is primarily responsible” (Holmes 164).

His arguments for positive eugenics, or procreation between members of a favoured class, are simply to increase “good heredity” (Holmes 146), but it is this suggestion that he feels will result in greater resistance. Holmes suggests that “no democratically governed community in the present age of enlightenment would support any measures for favouring the well born at the expense of the ill-born” (Holmes 146). Interestingly, he quotes Bertrand Russell in asserting that the “best chance [for eugenics to be employed] is Germany” (Bertrand Russell as quoted by Holmes 165) but “even there it is small” (Bertrand Russell as quoted by Holmes 165) because “eugenic procedures would meet with little approval in an ignorant and poverty-ridden community” (Holmes 148).

1.8 Relationship Between Nazi Germany and American Race Laws

That pheneticized eugenics were able to rise within Nazi Germany under race laws which bear similarity to American Jim Crow Laws is not coincidental. James Q. Whitman, a professor at Yale's Law School, details in his book, *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law*, the connections between Hitler's race-driven policies and racist American laws, including both the infamous Jim Crow Laws and the American Immigration Act of 1924. Hitler was, at the very least, inspired by what he read in regard to this new American immigration law during his time imprisoned after the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, with its proclaimed inclination towards those from Northern Europe, its regulations against those from Southern and Eastern Europe, and its outright rejection of all other people groups. Whitman takes painstaking measure to ensure that he does not overemphasize the relationship between the two administrations, or the influence of American policy upon those policies of Nazi Germany, even going so far as to recognize that Nazis had a general distaste for American values, but he does clearly demonstrate the influence of the American policy upon Hitler's thinking.

In no way does Whitman suggest a parallel between the two nations, but rather that the Nazis "found examples and precedents in the American legal race order" (Whitman 15) that they admired greatly. The purpose of Whitman's book is not to demonstrate America's complicitness in Nazi policies and practices, but rather to demonstrate that America's policies and laws were complicit in a collection of Western racist attitudes that sought to create nations through separation, expulsion, and exclusion. In its success, America thus became a model of racist policies to others, in this case Hitler, who took those policies to the extremes of nation creation. In this regard, Whitman provides a strong, detailed foundation of the principles of American

policy that influenced and encouraged the actions of Hitler and his Nazi regime. As Whitman explains in an October 2017 interview:

American law, hard though it might be for us to accept it now, was a model for everybody in the early 20th century who was interested in creating a race-based order or race state. America was the leader in a whole variety of realms in racist law in the first part of that century. Some of this involved American immigration law, which was designed to exclude so-called “undesirable races” from immigration. In 1924 American immigration law in particular was praised by Hitler himself, in his book *Mein Kampf*.

The appreciation for American immigration policy, which is clearly expressed in *Mein Kampf*, was not merely a distant admiration from across the ocean, but rather a catalyst towards greater restrictions on the non-naturalized, white German. Hitler, in no uncertain terms, wrote that “there is currently one state... of a better conception... of course not our exemplary German Republic, but the American Union” (*Mein Kampf*, as quoted by Whitman 45-46). Hitler goes on to praise America for its refusal of “unhealthy elements” and the outright exclusion of “certain races” which leads to the “characteristic *völkisch* conception of state” (Whitman 46).

The Nuremberg Laws shifted Judaism from a position of religious affiliation to one of blood measurement, restricting the rights and freedoms of Germans from Jewish ancestry. While Germany primarily used census records to identify those who would be restricted, pheneticism came into play as the Third Reich expanded across Europe, though Hitler, in shifting Judaism from religion to race, employs pheneticism outside of the class structure that I will discuss in the

second chapter, instead pheneticising, restricting, and murdering Jews regardless of their wealth or poverty. Hitler's pheneticism was employed to uphold his attitudes towards a purified nation-state more than a structure of power and prestige.

While the enforcement of the Jim Crow Laws and the Nuremberg Laws seem like extreme examples, they demonstrate the position phenetics can take within a state-sponsored structure of power. Pheneticism and the prejudiced ideas that came from the twisting of science's evolution revolution carried itself into the American slave trade, for obvious capitalistic reasons. With the widely held belief that those of African descent were uncivilized, and by misappropriating early comments from Darwin's journals such as "the difference between savage and civilized man... is greater than between a wild and domesticated animal," the western white conqueror had license to destroy African cultures for the expansion of farms and railways (equivalent to today's pipelines through native territories), and to reduce African slaves to the role of farm animal.

This led to the infamous state-level Jim Crow laws that attempted to enforce racial segregation and maintain the position of African as proletariat subject within a Eurocentric industrialized structure of power. However, in order to enforce the Jim Crow laws, those in power had to first decide, based on a genealogy of blood, who was 'black' and who was 'white,' which then requires the agents of the state—those tasked and entrusted with enforcing the dominant state ideology—to pheneticize subjects within false categories of race. It is important to note, as Wayde Compton points out, that, despite their later inspiring Hitler's platform, the Jim Crow laws of the United States were "stricter than the Nazis' anti-Semitic, anti-miscegenation laws" (21) and led to the popular and legal belief that even those who had far

more ‘white blood’ running through their veins than they did ‘black blood’ were both legally and socially defined as black.

1.9 The Counter-Example of Newton Knight and The Free State of Jones

Having noted that pheneticism is not an inherent quality and that attitudes towards purified bloodlines culminated on the battlegrounds of US slavery, it should be noted that even within that culture, there existed some people—outliers—who stood apart from the repressive structures of the state, acting as sovereigns, if even for a short time, apart from allegiances to the state in which they resided.

Whether recognizing the apparati, or agents of ideology, for what they truly are, or whether these outliers are simply responding to an obvious injustice without fully understanding the breadth of the machinations of the structure, the stand that these individuals and groups take against the ideology of the structure results in their being vilified by the state as treasonous enemies of the state. Let us consider the example of Newton Knight and the residents of the Free State of Jones.

While the 2016 film version of *The Free State of Jones* does its best to Hollywood-ize an already larger-than-life story, there are elements of truth within its telling that lead the viewer towards the anti-structural concepts of Newton Knight. What the movie gets wrong, however, is in the suggestion that Knight’s ideals were a result of the Civil War, when his opposition to the ideology of the structure in which he lived was clearly developing prior to that reality. The war only gave Knight and the people of Jones County a platform from which they could seek their freedom from that ideology.

In the only known interview Newton Knight ever gave⁶, he recounts that “Jones County never seceded from the Union into the Confederacy. Her delegate seceded.” Of the 400 residents who voted on the subject, all but seven voted to remain in the Union, but when “the Jones County delegate went up to the state convention at Jackson... he voted to secede with the rest of the county delegates. Jones County did not secede from the Union” (Newton Knight).

Meigs O. Frost validated this claim with records from the Mississippi Historical Society which show “Jones County, named after John Paul Jones, was in 1861 almost a unit against secession. Its citizens elected J.D. Powell, anti-secessionist candidate, to the Secession Convention at Jackson, by a heavy majority, only 24 votes being recorded for J.M. Baylis, the Secessionist candidate. But when the test came, Powell voted for secession. He was hanged in effigy in Jones County, and abused so violently that he did not return within its borders for a long time” (Frost). According to Dr. Victoria Bynum, it was “under pressure by fire-eating delegates in Jackson, [that] Powell caved in and voted for secession” (Bynum 2 - Blog).

Though conscription forced ‘Uncle Newt’ and his friends to the frontlines of the fighting, a call to which the residents of Jones County “responded loyally” (Frost), it also provided the rallying point for their choice to pursue freedom. “Then the rebels passed the Twenty Negro Law, up there at Richmond, Virginia, the capital. That law said that any white man owning 20 niggers or more didn't need to fight. He could go home 'n' raise crops.” (Newton Knight). The idea that the eldest sons of the wealthiest plantation owners—one son for every 20 slaves owned—would be spared the deaths impoverished Jones County residents had not asked for in the first place, proved to be too much. It was Jasper Collins, “a close friend of” Newton’s who

⁶ This interview, by Meigs O. Frost, was originally printed in the March 20, 1921 edition of the *New Orleans Item*. All quotes from Knight are taken from that publication.

first said, "this law... makes it a rich man's war and a poor man's fight" (Knight), though the line was attributed to Newton in the film. This would become the foundation upon which the Jones County deserters, first 50 and then later growing to "about 125" (Knight), would stand upon, united. Knight and his compatriots were able to recognize that their participation in the war had less to do with a black versus white ideology, and more to do with a structure of power that sought to preserve its wealth and power through the ideology of black as a subspecies ordained to serve the wealthy white, through the apparatus of a conscripted military of impoverished citizens who could not possibly benefit in the fight. Knight recalls the coercion of the apparatus and his rebellious response:

"I remember there was some Irish families there at Paulding. They were pretty bad off. They didn't want to fight, and the Confederates wouldn't give 'em or sell 'em anything. I gave 'em all the corn they said they wanted. Then we took the rest back to our headquarters in the woods."

(Newton Knight)

The structure was found in and formed by the South's wealthy landowners who first coerced Jones County into secession and later conscripted her sons into battle, all while the repressive state apparatus starved out poor farmers with a tax designed to fuel the war effort. The anti-structural quasi-Marxist⁷ leader was found in Newton Knight who "the boys elected... captain" (Knight). Loyal Deputies came from Newton's most trusted friends as the deserters "elected Jasper Collins first lieutenant and W.W. Sumrall second lieutenant" (Knight). The

⁷ I'm not suggesting that Newton Knight saw himself as a Marxist, but rather that he lived with Marxist tendencies, despite the realities of the structure surrounding his people.

anti-structural ideals of utopian equality already existed in the mind of Newton Knight, but the war provided the impetus for a larger group of deserters to stand against the ideologies of the repressive state apparatus, and in doing so, under Knight's influence, this group disregarded the interpellation of the African subject and, if only for a time, found equality in their community.

1.10 Racial Equality in the Free State of Jones

The men who rallied around Newton Knight were the type who owned “no slaves” (Frost), and while on the surface that sounds ideal, for most it was a result of circumstance more than it was conviction. Jones County was made up primarily of poor families who could not have afforded slaves if they wished them. Knight was different, however, being the grandson of John “Jackie” Knight, a wealthy landowner and one of the county's richest slave owners (Bynum 84), but slave-owning was not a tradition held by all in Newton's ancestry. There are several in the family tree who stood against slave ownership, one even legally manumitting two slaves as early as the late 18th century (Bynum 20). Knight himself, through religious conviction, believed slavery was ungodly, though it is unclear if he viewed black men as his equal under God. While many deserters in Jones county were simply arrested and conscripted back into service out of fear of imprisonment or death, Newton Knight's Company “intended desertion to be permanent” even to the point of declaring “war on the Confederacy” (Bynum 94). This act, by its nature in a volatile time, required the egalitarian action of enlisting the services of both white women and people of colour. The “Jones County guerrilla war revealed with searing clarity the interdependence of men, women, children and slaves in the struggle” (Bynum 94) against their common oppressors. The “stereotype of men protecting women was turned on its head as wives

and daughters protected them” and Knight’s “need to enlist the aid of slaves replaced the white masters’ need to govern slaves” (Bynum 94).

Although Knight’s interview with Meigs O. Frost doesn’t recount the participation of black friends, he recounts this fond memory of women involved in the struggle:

"Yes, those ladies sure helped us a lot. I recollect when Forrest's cavalry came a-raidin' after us. They had 44 bloodhounds after us, those boys and General Robert Lowry's men. But 42 of them hounds just naturally died. They'd get hungry and some of the ladies, friends of ours, would feed 'em. And they'd die. Strange, wasn't it?" (Frost)

Perhaps it was through necessity that men dropped their pride and accepted help from unlikely sources, or perhaps Newton Knight had a very different view of what it meant to be human—of what it means to be part of a community. Regardless, there is no doubt that, even as outliers, this group stood in direct opposition to the structure despite the teachings of the ideological state apparatus or the attempted enforcement by the repressive state apparatus, two ideas that we will expand in the second chapter.

1.11 Newton, Serena, and Rachel

Serena Turner Knight, the first wife of Newton Knight and mother of five of his children, is portrayed and remembered as someone who separated from Newton for a time, though they were legally married until his death in 1922. It is possible that Serena’s abandonment of Knight and her choice to not live in the swamps of Jones County pursued by Confederate forces was merely an act of survival and for the protection of her children, but the act is often recounted as an abandonment of her marriage partner. Either way, upon returning to the family farm, Knight

had taken up a common-law relationship with Rachel, a former slave who at times had been pheneticized as Creole, Indian, or “just a regular negro woman” (Bynum 1).

The reality is that Newton Knight, before, during, and particularly after the war, did not view race relations in the same light as his neighbours. Many of the men who had joined the forces of Knight’s militia and worked alongside and with their black neighbours, later went back to the segregation of their community, but Knight remained in an interracial community, living on and working poor land that others did not want. “Unlike the vast majority of his friends and neighbours, Newton Knight, in a complete rejection of the structures of power that surrounded his community, defied the racial order imposed under the “redeemed” government of the late nineteenth century. Just as his earlier opposition to the Confederate government was rooted in personal experiences of the war, so to a large extent was his rejection of racial segregation” (Bynum 144).

It is clear that, although pheneticism within human interaction has allowed for the structures of capitalist power to enforce enslaved labour for the purposes of profit and power, there, too, have been those in ancient times and within American history who have stood opposed to these structures and ideologies. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, his rejection of race separation has as much to do with power maintenance as the Jim Crow laws of America’s South; however, there are those, such as Newton Knight, whose opposition to racial segregation is directly tied to the rejection of an oppressive state ideology designed to strengthen power and wealth on the sacrifice of the poor. That pheneticism is a state-sponsored action, then, is of little surprise.

CHAPTER 2: Pheneticism and Critical Theory

2.1 A Short Glossary of Althusserian Terms

Structure - The overarching system of societal participation and human interaction which considers aspects of life such as language, class, thought, and the provision of needs and desires.

Repressive State Apparatuses - Those aspects of a society—police, military, courts—which are governed by the state and used to protect, build, and maintain the structure itself, as well as the positions of power within the structure.

Ideological State Apparatuses - Those aspects of a society—religion, education, culture in general—which are not governed by the state, but which predominantly position themselves as agents of the ruling dominant ideology.

Ruling Dominant Ideology - The underlying systemic principles which, when taught and enforced through the various state apparatuses, promote and protect the structure of that society. For the purposes of this paper, the primary ruling dominant ideology of contemporary Western civilization to be considered is found in capitalism.

Interpellation - The belief that ideas and ideologies are shared and must be both presented and accepted in order for the idea to reach fruition. In this paper, I hope to demonstrate that the very act of pheneticizing a subject is an act of interpellation, and that that act is, through the dominant ideologies of our time, accepted in forms of agreement by both the subject being objectified and the objectifier.

Objectifier & Subject - In the first chapter the positions of objectifier and subject were juxtaposed frequently. **Objectifier** is the individual standing in the position of power or acting as an ideological agent of the state and is awarded that position either through self-determination or at the behest of the repressive state apparatus. The **Subject**, however, must be considered quite closely, to understand both the evolution of the subjective position and the role the subject plays in accepting—or rejecting—the subjectified position. It is important to consider how these ideas relate to existing arguments of structure and interpellation.

2.2 A Brief Consideration of Structure

Louis Althusser begins his famous essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (1970, 1984) with the following conclusions about societal structure:

It follows that, in order to exist, every social formation must reproduce the conditions of its production at the same time as it produces, and in order to be able to produce. It must therefore reproduce:

1. the productive forces,
2. the existing relations of production. (Althusser 2, 2)

For the purposes of this paper and its relation to Althusser’s structuralism, I wish to maintain the focus on the structural need to reproduce a willing and subjectified labour force. In order to understand the ideological position of a white-black binary of race tied to blood, we must first understand that the purpose of the structure within the Marxist-Leninist theory that is Althusser’s foundation, which is to maintain and strengthen the positions of power held by the wealthy elite,

requiring a willing and reproducing proletariat. According to Piaget, the “transformations” of “sociological structures” must, by their nature, “unfold in time” (Piaget 15). That is to say, there is an evolution to the sociological structure that unfolds over time. However, I would posit that, despite the evolution of these structures, within a capitalist-minded society, the foundational principles which form the dominant ideologies of the structure morph very little, even if the outward appearance of the structure appears to change greatly. Later in this chapter we will consider the writings of the abolitionist William Wilberforce, who despite his intentions to markedly affect and alter the structure, makes it clear that the underlying principles of his project—the ruling dominant ideology of his time to which he personally subscribed—remain true to the ruling ideologies of capitalism that the subjectified black man is an impoverished subject whose purpose is to serve the elite classes of society. As Althusser suggests:

The reproduction of labour power thus reveals as its *sine qua non* not only the reproduction of its 'skills' but also the reproduction of its subjection to the ruling ideology or of the 'practice' of that ideology, with the proviso that it is not enough to say 'not only but also', for it is clear that *it is in the forms and under the forms of ideological subjection that provision is made for the reproduction of the skills of labour power.* (Althusser 1, 133)

2.3 A Brief Consideration of Interpellation

Noela Davis, in “Subjected Subjects? On Judith Butler’s Paradox of Interpellation” (2012), approaches interpellation through the notion of performativity. As she writes:

The potential of interpellation as the basis for a performative theory of subjectivity lies in its being a naming that constitutes the subject it so names. There is no subject before the naming; that is, interpellation does not describe a pre-existing or given subject which then internalizes or appropriates its subjectifying conditions. Instead, interpellation gives an account of the genesis of the subject; that is, of the subject as an already subjectified, and thus social, being. (Davis 882)

This might as well be a description of pheneticism in action. Though the end of slavery in America came through civil war—a war, as noted in the first chapter of this thesis, committed to the protection of an ideology which upheld and protected the ruling class structure—and not through a nationwide state-sponsored abolition as in the British colonies, a requirement still existed within the ideologies of capitalism to reconstruct the nation such that established positions of power could be reproduced and increased. A working-class slave, for the most part, was easily identified through the registrations held by the repressive state apparatus. In ending slavery and declaring the African subject ‘free,’ the potential existed, theoretically speaking, for the structure to lose its labour force, and more importantly, its ability to continually reproduce its labour force. It is for this reason, I would argue, that some American states, particularly those in the south, but not exclusively so, enacted and enforced the infamous Jim Crow Laws of racial segregation based on the ideology of one drop of black blood does a black subject make.

In this manner, all subjects of African ancestry, no matter how small the percentage, could be pheneticized by their white counterparts as black and subjugated to positions of lower education, lower wages, and a reliance on menial labour within the workforce. Free but not free.

This interpellation of the subject, however, does require that the subject agree. If white person A, perhaps a bus driver in Montgomery, Alabama says to African person B, “Hey, you’re black. Get to the back of the bus,” there is a requirement of person B to acknowledge the pronouncement in order for B to be subject to A’s position. It does not require B to move to the back of the bus or even to agree, “Yes, I’m black,” but in merely addressing A in the conversation, B becomes subject to the power position of A’s pheneticization as an agent of the state. A has determined, based on what he sees and the context in which he sees it, that B is black and therefore must be relegated to a lower position. If B acknowledges A in any way, he becomes subject to that belief. As Judith Butler suggests in her rendering of Althusser’s theory:

The constitution of the subject is material to the extent that this constitution takes place through rituals, and these rituals materialize “the ideas of the subject” (Butler 19).

In other words, B must participate in the ritual of acknowledged conversation, or in adhering to the request of A, in order for B to be realized as subject to A’s position. Participation is required in order for subjectification to occur.

2.4 The Shane Book Experience

Canadian author and poet Shane Book details in his essay “Border Crossings”⁸ (Appendix 2) that as the son of a “Dutch-Irish-German-American from Manitoba on his father’s side” with a mother who is “mostly black except for one of her grandparents being Chinese and “someone way back having some Spanish and Caribe Indian mixed in” (Book 27), he is a

⁸ “Border Crossings” is the little-known work that inspired Wayde Compton’s essay “Pheneticizing versus Passing.” It is from these foundations that this thesis grew.

Canadian born in Peru due to his parents' employment at the time of his birth who has been repeatedly pheneticized by people in power. Police, border guards, and American Homeland Security have labelled him as Peruvian, Samoan, Hispanic, Native American, Mexican, and Arabic. In each case, the official in power instigated the conversation, ignored Book's self-identification, despite his presenting identification, and made assumptions about Shane based on what they saw and where they saw him. Book has experienced state-sponsored pheneticism including a Homeland Security accusation that he was plotting to blow up the Golden Gate Bridge because he had the audacity, as a middle-eastern man (which he is not), to walk across the bridge after midnight, the only time he had to visit the structure.

It is not only that he was mislabeled, but that in these interactions of mislabeling it was also assumed by members of the Canadian and American Repressive State Apparatuses that he was a drunk native on the wrong side of Winnipeg from "where all the Indians live" (Book 25); a violent-minded middle-eastern man who could have no other reason to visit a bridge than terrorism; and a migrant fruit-worker, as that could be the only reason for a Hispanic person—which is also not Shane's background—to be in Washington state. In the world we are living in, it is not only the mislabelling that is an issue, it is the inherent risks associated with the prejudice of the label, and the ideological purposes for which the labels are applied as it is enforced by agents of the repressive state apparatus.

But what of interpellation? Is Shane subject to the repressive state apparatus simply because he acknowledges its position of power? In that regard, the state, with severe punishments in place for those who would ignore the demands of these agents, requires us all to be subject to such inconvenience as Shane has experienced. As Althusser writes, the repressive

state apparatus operates “massively and predominantly” through violence and the threat of violence. The difficulty comes in that this interpellation occurs as a result of Shane being pheneticized based on a multiracial, somewhat ambiguous appearance, and the context in which he has been pheneticized by the agents of the state. Through responding to each officer mentioned in the essay, Shane does subjectify himself to their state-sanctioned positions of power, but he has little choice.

Perhaps what is more concerning is the ruling ideology found within the manner in which Shane is pheneticized in the above examples:

1. As a native—he is not native—Shane, according to an agent of the ideology, should be segregated to a particular part of town.
2. As an Arab—he is not Arabic—Shane, according to an agent of the ideology, is a danger to American freedom.
3. As a Mexican—he is not Mexican—Shane, according to an agent of the ideology, must be a low-wage earning member of the proletariat.

Collectively within these examples, Shane is pheneticized in obvious accordance to the ruling dominant ideology of capitalism that a person of colour is dangerous, subservient to the capitalists, and in need of segregation.

2.5 The Subject’s Journey to the “Black Code of the State” (Macaulay, 13)

During the feudal system of the middle ages, which I would argue is the ancestral foundation to the American realization of capitalism, the proletariat were literally ‘subjects’ to the elites’ aristocracy. The existent God-ordained plenary law, or ruling ideology of the time,

saw to the structural positioning of a subjectified working class through to the start of colonial expansion and industrialization. It was only at this time that some within a Eurocentric working class began to believe that upward mobility was not only possible, but truly attainable.

While this early division between serfdom and aristocracy within England's feudal system is relatively easy to delineate, a shift to waged workers in industrialized Europe begins, somewhat to blur the lines and morph the structure. The foundational principle—or state ideology—however, changes very little. Those in the elite positions of power wish to maintain their positions through the production of capitalistic wealth and must therefore also produce (and reproduce) a working class citizen content to perform the labours that produce the wealth required by the wealthy, powerful elite. Whether that elite is a member of the monarchy doling out provisions to peasants who toil in the fields, or the later-to-appear Robber Barons of the industrial revolution overworking their employees for minimal wages, the purpose changes little while the practice changes greatly. In order for this continuation of dominance, the labourers must accept their role within the structure through an act of submission to the ideology of the day. Therefore, two things must occur simultaneously:

1. A reproduction of the labour force.
2. A submission of the labour force to their masters.

As Althusser states:

To put this more scientifically, I shall say that the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers,

and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too will provide for the domination of the working class ‘in words’. (Althusser 1, 133)

In this regard, as I touched on in the previous chapter, the early 20th century science of Leonard Darwin and his contemporaries was somewhat anti-establishment. While manipulating the gene pool through eugenic breeding for the purposes of controlling or possibly accelerating human evolution might strengthen the human stock from within the elite classes of society, that line of thinking has the simultaneous potential to decrease the proletariat pool from which the social elite can draw their labourers. It is of little coincidence that in the post-Hitler world, positive eugenics⁹ is often only presented in the form of a tax credit or ‘baby bonus’ to mothers and parents within the working class. While eugenics, as a whole, fell out of vogue in the aftermath of Hitler’s attempt to exterminate an entire cultural group, positive eugenics are now utilized in the western world to reproduce the labour force needed for the structure to exist.

In order for this structure of power to be maintained, one in which the elite hold or increase their positions of power through the efforts of a dominated workforce, there must exist first a propagation of ideology through state-sponsored or state-sanctioned apparatuses which serve to disseminate the “ruling ideology correctly” (Althusser 1, 133). In other words, agents of the state—whether they be those of the repressive state apparatuses found in policing and military or those of the ideological state apparatuses found in education, religion and culture—must agree to and administer by force or indoctrination an ideology that maintains the

⁹ Positive eugenics are any and all activities which encourage an increased birth rate within a set people group, and sits in contrast to negative eugenics which prevent or prohibit procreation within a set group.

statuses of both the labourer and the exploiter. In the Middle Ages, the Clergy and Knights managed or enforced the ideology for the nobility, while benefiting from ranks higher than that of the peasants. In capitalist America, middle-class managers, clergy, educators, police, and military personnel serve in a similar role, furthering the ideology required to maintain a submissive workforce. Althusser says it this way:

In other words, the school (but also other State institutions like the Church, or other apparatuses like the Army) teaches 'know-how', but in forms *which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of its 'practice'. All the agents of production, exploitation, and repression, not to speak of the 'professionals of ideology' (Marx), must in one way or another be 'steeped' in this ideology in order to perform their tasks 'conscientiously'—the tasks of the exploited (the proletarians), of the exploiters (the capitalists), of the exploiters' auxiliaries (the managers), or of the high priests of the ruling ideology (its 'functionaries'), etc.

(Althusser 1, 133).

Though the appearance of the structure has changed over time, its purpose has not. The functionaries which serve as agents of the ideology are no longer friars and priests, but instead teachers, clergy, and the media, while the auxiliaries are no longer knights, but politicians, police, and members of the military. In the history of the West, these shifts in the appearance of the structure have happened gradually, and have also included the African slave trade.

2.6 The Repressive State Apparatus Within The African Slave Trade Structural

Shift

In 1824, Scottish abolitionist Zachary Macaulay published a reflection on the peculiar institution of slavery in the New World. As we read:

The law by which slaves, and even free Men of Colour, are governed in the Carolinas—and Mr. Hall believes that the same or a similar code prevails in all the *slave* states—is a provincial act passed in 1740, and made perpetual in 1783. It begins with an enactment justly and feelingly stigmatized by our authors as a “heart-chilling declaration.” It is as follows: “Whereas, in His Majesty’s plantations, &c. slavery has been allowed, be it enacted, that all Negroes, Mulattoes, &c. who are or shall hereafter be in this province, and all their issue and offspring, born and to be born, shall be, and are, declared to be, and shall for ever hereafter, absolute slaves. (Macaulay, 2-3)

This “heart-chilling” law, placed within the capitalist structure for the production and reproduction of a labour force, sits somewhat in contrast with Althusser’s position that the “reproduction of labour power... is ensured by giving labour power the material means with which to reproduce itself: by wages” (Althusser 1, 4). The contrast is important because, though colonial law in the provinces which would later become the United States of America, held laws, “made perpetual” after Independence, that created and maintained an interminable supply of working class possessions, therefore replacing in some areas of the workforce a need for working class citizens, we will later see that the move toward abolition was not a move toward

destructuralization, but rather a structuring toward a reproduction of labour more akin to Althusser's position. The only requirements for the ongoing supply of working, owned slaves, were the acceptance of the law by the populace, people who were influenced both by the ideological state apparatuses found in the church and school and the repressive state apparatus found in policing and the law. In regard to the repressive state apparatus, a term with which Macaulay could not be familiar, he states, that in the manner in which "Christians govern Christians," due to their real and ongoing fear of "an insurrection" a "military police is constantly kept" (Macaulay, 4). But these laws were not enough to subjugate the African slave. By 1817, Louisiana passed a law that further dehumanized the working black subject. As Macaulay states:

By this law, any slave found occupying, or sleeping in, any house, out-house, building, or enclosure, not his owner's or immediate employer's, without a ticket from such owner or employer, expressly describing the place, and specifying the time for which the license is granted, shall be committed to gaol (jail) by any officer of police, or any other White person, there to receive twenty lashes, on a warrant from the mayor or justice of the peace, unless his owner or master shall previously pay five dollars for him, with all costs. (13)

Not only does the law relegate the African slave to the position of domestic animal (if not brute commodity) with all aspects of his life—permissions relating to both time and space—it thoroughly emphasizes the manner in which the state apparatus was complicit in maintaining the perpetual workforce for the structure. Further, not only is the ruling ideology upheld by the

police, mayor, and justice of the peace, this law elevates not only the slave owner, but all white citizens as agents of the state who possess a responsibility to mete out justice in the name of a colour-coded racial divide. It should be noted that, as the 1740 law cited above denotes both “Negroes and Mulattoes” as subject to the law, and the 1817 law elevates all white people to a position of authority on behalf of the state, the law is therefore instructing all white people to pheneticize all people of colour to determine whether they are in violation of the ideology that benefits the structure.

With additional clauses that further position the White individual as necessary objectifier of the ‘dangerous’ black subject, the practice of pheneticizing within the white community becomes ubiquitous. One such law demands any slave to “forfeit” to “any White person” any “cane, club, or other stick” in his possession, and that any “slave carrying any arms whatsoever, shall be punished in the manner prescribed by the Black Code of this State” (Macaulay, 13). Another declares that any slave who disrespects a “White person... shall receive thirty lashes” (Macaulay, 14). These laws all lend themselves to the same series of false conclusions, which in turn, behoove the White community to pheneticize their black neighbours:

1. People of colour, even mixed-race, are a subspecies, degraded, lower form of human.
2. People of colour, even mixed-race, are dangerous.
3. People of colour, even mixed-race, not adhering to the oppressive restrictions of their master, should be detained and punished for their insurrection.

Of course, such ideologies were not exclusive to America. In Jamaica during the same time period, for example, where “*slaves... are still regarded by the law, and treated, in point of*

face, not as human beings but as chattels” (Macaulay, 83) and where all that was required was “*a black skin, or even the visible tinge of African blood*” which “*furnishes a legal presumption of slavery*” (Macaulay, 84). That these prejudices which call for and result in pheneticizing the coloured subject, is of little surprise. In fact, the practice continues today.

2.7 The Example of Arizona SB-1070

Although slavery has long-since been abolished in America, the practice of colour-coded pheneticizing has not. In 2010, long before Donald Trump ran for President and long before race-driven carding was a politicized issue in most parts of North America, Arizona passed a law known as Arizona SB 1070. That law—portions of which were overturned by the US Supreme Court in 2012¹⁰—states and still allows that any person whom a police officer can reasonably determine is an illegal alien must have identity papers on them at all times and a failure to produce those papers will result in the LEGAL and indefinite detainment of the individual until identification papers can be produced. This is not too different from the 1817 law that required a black subject to have an explicit “ticket” from his owner, detailing his ability to travel off of the plantation.

In the case of SB-1070, the ambiguity of “reasonably determine,” in practice, has seemingly only applied to those who appear to be Mexican, which is how the law is used on a daily basis. Those passing legislation are asking those in the position of power—in fact they are demanding it of their ideological agents—to pheneticize all who appear Mexican to them, regardless of citizenship. This is problematic for several reasons:

¹⁰ Section 2 of Arizona SB 1070, which was not overturned but upheld by the courts, requires pheneticism by police and other agents of the state.

1. Arizona used to be part of Mexico. There are US Citizens who have lived in Arizona for generations who, not surprisingly, look Mexican. It is their heritage.
2. Those who come to America legally, as a tourist or on a work visa, are required to carry identification with them at all times, something I am technically supposed to do should I visit Arizona, but I have little reason for concern with my white skin. I feel very confident no police officer would ever ask to see my identification unless it was a routine traffic stop. This sends a clear and prejudicial message to the populous that those of Mexican descent are a bigger threat to America, even if they are naturalized citizens, than a person of European heritage.
3. As Shane Book has demonstrated, it is very difficult, based only on appearance and context, to determine if someone is of Mexican heritage. He wasn't even in Arizona at the time he was misidentified (pheneticized) in that regard. He was in Washington State, a few miles from the Canadian border, but he was still detained and questioned by an agent of the state apparatus, regardless of his ability to indicate Canadian citizenship.

2.8 The Ideological State Apparatus Within The African Slave Trade Structural Shift

There can be little doubt that, although the ideology of America's slave-abusing south elevated all white subjects above all subjects of colour, which as Macaulay states, was the "driving system" that placed "the arbitrary power of punishment... in the hands of the Whites" (88), that the purpose of the laws and this elevation of the white 'race'—an elevation which only served to relegate most white subjects into a position of unofficial agent of the repressive state

apparatus—was to maintain the structure that benefited the elite few. As Macaulay notes, “land cultivated by slaves requires a considerable capital, and will therefore be divided among a small number of proprietors” (23). These few men of means, or what Macaulay calls “the upper, corrupted by power” (24), are the true beneficiaries of slave labour in America’s south, and except in rare cases, as was noted in the example of Newton Knight and Jasper Collins, most white subjects were not only willing to accept an ideology with “moral effects [which are] fatal to the man” (Macaulay, 23) they were also willing to enforce the laws that primarily benefited only the wealthiest citizens.

In order for this broad acceptance, even from within the white proletariat, we must consider the role of the ideological state apparatus. For Althusser: “All ideological State Apparatuses, whatever they are, contribute to the same result: the reproduction of the relations of production, i.e. of capitalist relations of exploitation” (1, 28). We can read Zachary Macaulay’s treatise in terms of Althusser’s assertion. While Macaulay makes little note of the active educational and religious teachings within Britain during the African slave trade, nor in the British colonies themselves, there are a few notes from within his writing which indicate the active presence of an ideological state apparatus and the complicit behavior of those involved. In referencing the British colonies and a bill passed in 1795 which allowed for and encourage the manumission of slaves, Macaulay writes:

nothing has been done during the last thirty years to promote the gradual manumission of the slave-population, or to remove the obstructions which impeded it; but on the contrary, those obstructions have in some instances been materially increased. (84)

In noting that Britain was actively encouraging the abolition of slavery within other nations (Macaulay, 84) without considering the lack of practice within their own colonies, noting that, beyond the “increase in fines on manumission” (Macaulay, 87), there was at play a “moral condition” (Macaulay, 87) acting as an impediment to the division of “all classes, whether White or Black” (Macaulay, 87). Amongst these were the Church’s refusal to perform the sacrament of marriage for slaves and the refusal by Christian landowners to have workers observe the Sabbath which could only result in a perplexed and offended African population “of having Christianity offered them by men whose system of proceeding is a flagrant outrage of its most sacred obligations” (Macaulay, 88), despite the Church’s professed desire to “*protect the domestic and connubial happiness of slaves*” (Wilberforce 14).

While these are observations from within the colonies after the independence of the United States, Macaulay also notes the effect of these teachings and their broader acceptance amongst otherwise ‘moral’ men in America. In noting the power of the ideological apparatus, Macaulay notes that “Mr. Duff” a “respectable individual” from Virginia who is “friendly,” “temperate,” “benevolent,” and who has never “uttered an immoral expression,” yet, succumbed to the “withering effect of slavery on moral feelings” (Macaulay, 11). This so-called, upstanding, moral Christian man discussed the manner in which “some buy Negroes... and drive them, chained together, to different markets” in the same manner as “hogs, oxen, or horses” as a legitimate manner in which “men had in that part of the country of making money.” (Macaulay, 11). When confronted by Macaulay’s friend and contemporary, Lieutenant Francis Hall, at the inhumanity and contradictions of the slave trade in a Christian nation, Mr. Duff’s response, “without any... feeling” (11) suggested that those who trade in slaves were “honourable men” the

same as any other “fair dealers in the community” (12). While anecdotal, this example illustrates the degree to which the ideology had taken root in freely acting white subjects. Though there is no indication that Mr. Duff, himself, participated in the trading of slaves, his position of acceptance of slave trading as a legitimate means to make a living indicates that the ideology was firmly rooted within the community and that the ideology, first and foremost, was rooted in the capitalist desire to accumulate wealth.

It is for this reason that William Wilberforce, an English abolitionist who was Macaulay’s contemporary, refers to the practice of slave trading as a “a system of the grossest injustice, of the most heathenish irreligion and immorality, of the most unprecedented degradation, and unrelenting cruelty” (Wilberforce, 3). The politician’s use of the term “heathenish irreligion” denotes a criticism of a corrupt church positioned, as ideological state apparatus, to uphold the structure of power for the elite for the less-than-religious purpose of the accumulation of wealth without regard for human life. As Wilberforce notes, “the long continuance of this system” with a “prevailing ignorance of its real nature” (Wilberforce, 3) which is enacted and protected only to serve the “essential and incurable vices which will invariably exist wherever the power of man over man is unlimited” (Wilberforce, 4). The African Slave Trade, both inside and outside of the United States, was upheld by the ideological state apparatuses, enforced by the repressive state apparatuses, which included the pseudo-position of state agent afforded every person of white skin and a European background, and was protected for the sole purpose of maintaining and reproducing a subjectified, inexpensive, possessed proletariat to maintain and increase the positions of power held by the elite. That is not to say, however, that abolitionists such as Zachary Macaulay and William Wilberforce were

anti-capitalist, nor that they saw in the African subject anything other than a workforce labourer to maintain the structures of capitalism.

2.9 Pheneticism and Structure After The Abolition of Slavery

If the character of structured wholes depends on their laws of composition, these laws must of their very nature be structuring: it is the constant duality, or bipolarity, of always being simultaneously structuring and structured that accounts for the success of the notion of law or rule employed by structuralists. (Piaget, 10)

I do not wish to overstate the position of Macaulay or Wilberforce. While they may be great representatives of the Abolitionist movement, that does not mean that they held a position of anti-capitalism. On the contrary, Macaulay and Wilberforce, in the same writings cited above, indicate a desire to restructure the capitalist society of which they were part, through the introduction of new laws—a restructuring of the same ideology—for the purpose of further relegating the subjectified African to the roles found within the workforce, under the guise of a Christian-induced freedom. As Wilberforce suggests in his *Appeal to Religion, Justice, and Humanity* (1823): “we should now be rejoicing in the delightful change which the mass of our Negro population would have experienced, from a state of ignominious bondage to the condition of a free man and happy peasantry” (Wilberforce, 6). Wilberforce is a capitalist who wishes to reshape the legal framework, or ideology, of his time by structuring (in Piaget’s terms) a new approach to the reproduction of the workforce that comes under the pretense of Christian brotherhood in the form of a “legitimate system of civil subordination” (Wilberforce, 7).

In this regard, Wilberforce's Christianity sits opposed to the Marxist-Leninist view of human freedom as articulated by Althusser. In order for the African slave to be truly free, Wilberforce would need to "see them as they are and to free them from class exploitation" (Althusser 1, 84). However, in reality, the abolitionist Wilberforce is seeking a healthier grade of slave—referred to as a free peasant—with a lower mortality rate, higher birth rate, and a propensity toward hegemonic Christian values. He is unable to see the slaves as either human or free, and in no way does he desire to free the African subject from the class struggle of the capitalist structure of Western civilization. Macauley suggests that the "*most wretched* of our paupers might envy the allotment of the *happy* negro" and that, in the state of slavery, the "expressions of servile respect" with which the "Negro approaches the White man" has the "chilling indication of a crushed spirit" and that if the "laws of humanity" were to be "reversed," the ruling class might benefit from a "courtesy" similar to the "French and Italian peasant" who give "grace to Poverty" (Macauley 10-11). The two abolitionists focus much of their writing on a "progressive decrease in mortality" (Wilberforce, 8), which can be accomplished through the "seasoning of newly imported Africans" (Wilberforce, 9); the "great mortality amongst infants" which was "great beyond what could have been imagined" (Macauley, 60); and the willingness of the African slave to "become the subjects of religious and moral culture" (Wilberforce 48) under the "Supreme Ordainer of all things, in his moral administration of the universe" (Wilberforce 18).

While acknowledging that "such is the law [in the] British colonies" (70), Macauley the capitalist political figure is attempting to partake in a structuring of the law that would result in the continued exploitation of a African proletariat, which maintains the structural position of the racially divided working class as part of the structure because, as Althusser argues, all

“exploitation is already class struggle” (Althusser 1, 82). Although Macauley sought a healthier and happy African workforce in their role as subjectified peasants, without bringing the “opposite extremes of the two classes into competition” (Macauley, 23), the reality of his position is that it is simply a (re)structuring of the capitalistic class structure already in place. In fact, in his arguments for the complete abolition of slavery, Wilberforce states:

By the salutary operation of these various improvements, the slaves would have become qualified for the enjoyment of liberty; and preparation would have been made for the happy day, when the yoke should be taken off for ever, when the blessed transmutation should take place of a degraded slave population into a free and industrious peasantry. (Wilberforce, 26)

Wilberforce, as a member of the elite calling for changes to the structure of the elite, cannot prevent himself from merely mirroring the racial oppression already in existence. The class struggle must come from within the “mode of production and exploitation” (Althusser 1 83), not from within the class benefitting from the exploitation. That Wilberforce positions slavery and peasantry as “two antagonistic groups of classes” (Althusser 1, 83), rather than recognizing the diametrically opposed position of the wealthy landowners in relation to the owned slave, shows his complicity to the structure or his complete lack of understanding when it comes to the “primacy of the class struggle” (Althusser 1, 83). The goal of the oppressed is not to merely rise up one rung under feigned freedom, but rather to achieve full autonomy and equality, which requires a complete subversion of the structure itself. It is for this reason, the need to maintain the structure and resist the overthrow of the dominant ideology, that America implemented the phenetically-demanding Jim Crow Laws.

Abolition, Passing, and Pheneticism Beyond Jim Crow America

Wayde Compton argues in his essay that the “term ‘passing’ is rooted in the context of the American Reconstruction, and therefore, within his essay, replaces the term with pheneticizing as an experiment. However, it would be wrong to only consider pheneticizing in contrast with the attitudes of passing that rise from 19th century America when state-sponsored pheneticizing as a practice, of which Arizona SB-1070 is but one example, has continued into the 21st century. The reality is that the interpellation found within pheneticizing the subject as ‘other’ has progressed from the African subject descended from slaves to those of both Latin American descent and Middle-Eastern.

Ed Bridgeman, the Chair of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati and a self-proclaimed “expert of terrorism” (an agent of the ideological state apparatus from an Althusserian perspective), argues that community-based pheneticizing is “simply neighborhood watch on a larger level.” Bridgeman believes and teaches that if “you see something that doesn’t look right, it probably isn’t right, and you need to be vigilant” (Zimmerman). The question then becomes: Who determines what looks as though it is right and who decides what looks to be wrong? From whose perspective do we consider these things in contrast with one another? We know from at least one case in Florida that an armed neighbourhood watch commando employed these prejudicial techniques when he shot an unarmed, hooded black teenager. George Zimmerman thought that Trayvon Martin looked out of place and acted, in his mind *and* in the mind of the courts (the repressive state apparatus), reasonably. This case is not significantly different from the series of police officers and authority figures who have injected themselves

into the multi-ethnic heritage of Shane Book. Agents of the state, pheneticizing based solely on appearance, and taking action against the objectified subject, which to them, appears wrong.

This then becomes the core issue in pheneticism. The interpellated subject is not at liberty to resist being subjectified by those who act as agents on behalf of those in power. Ed Bridgeman, as a representation of the ideological state apparatus, teaches pheneticism as necessary for state security; the police, as agents of the repressive state apparatus, with repeated examples in Shane Book's life, actively pheneticize those who appear different; the non-pheneticized subject, such as George Zimmerman, enforces street law based on his phenetic assumptions; and therefore the racialized, pheneticized subject, such as Shane Book, is not truly free from the state oppressions that come from appearing 'different.' If he were to ignore the interpellation, the coloured subject knows that a fate such as experienced by Trayvon Martin is a realistic possibility. This type of state-sponsored violence, of course, is not new. It has merely grown into our digital consciousness to a greater extent in the years since Rodney King was beaten. Althusser summarizes it this way:

The duplicate mirror-structure of ideology ensures simultaneously:

1. the interpellation of 'individuals' as subjects
2. their subjection to the Subject;
3. the mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subjects' recognition of each other, and finally the subject's recognition of himself;
4. the absolute guarantee that everything really is so, and that on condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave

accordingly, everything will be all right: Amen — ‘*So be it*’. (1, 55)

It is in this fourth point that the difficulty lies. If the subject is expected to behave a certain way, according to the ideologies of the time, in order that everything is all right, but some subjects are pheneticized as dangerous or less than, based only upon appearance and physical context, then, to those subjects, the situation is not all right. In fact, it is within the phenetic interpellation of the coloured subject that resistance to the structure is born, which then provides license to armed warriors such as George Zimmerman to ‘stand his ground’ despite being told by agents of the state to stand down. The state then argues that if the coloured subject had have acquiesced to his pheneticized position, he would still be alive. The result then, is that the coloured or biracial subject must agree to prejudicial treatment, even from self-appointed agents of the state, knowing that this treatment is not equal to that faced by their white counterparts, and that failure to recognize themselves as subject makes them responsible for whatever harm should come. The coloured subject, therefore, more so than their white neighbours, becomes “a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission” (Althusser 1, 56). Any individual who is truly free and living with his own consciousness, according to Althusser, “must act according to his ideas” (1, 42), however, the pheneticized subject must act in accordance with the ideologies of the state as enforced by the repressive state apparatuses, therefore, the pheneticized subject is not truly free, regardless of what Wilberforce and Macauley might suggest. “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Althusser 1, 36), and it is to this ideology, through the threat of state-sanctioned violence, that the pheneticized subject

is enslaved. The freedom assigned to the subject who possesses consciousness is robbed from the subject who is not afforded the opportunity to act upon the consciousness he possesses. The difficulty faced by the pheneticized subject in Althusser's theory of subject recognition, is that the "guarantee given by the Subject to the subjects if they freely accept their subjection" (Althusser 1, 56) is not a guarantee (safety, provision, protection, freedom) provided to those who are pheneticized as people of colour. The structure fails to make secure the pheneticized subject, even should he accept his position as subject beneath the ruling ideology of the day. In that regard, every pheneticized subject is in conflict with the structure because the mirrored subject ideological guarantee does not exist for these individuals.

Further, in separating the proletariat based on the false notion of race, the pheneticized subject may be robbed of the opportunity to participate in a class struggle, if the non-pheneticized members of the working class fail to recognize their pheneticized brethren as comrades in the fights against structural oppression. "The class struggle is not an individual struggle" (Althusser 1, 86), but in elevating the white subject to a position of authority over those who possess 'black blood,' the elite class manages to solidify its position in preventing the potential coming together of the proletariat in a struggle against oppression. The popular position—popular enough to see Trump elected President—that the African descendant's choice to act upon their conscience based on free will and thought, somehow sits as a direct threat against the state and therefore the guarantees offered to the rest of the proletariat, fails to truly understand the structure or the labourer's position within it. In effect, the false notion of an

elevated white working class causes the white subject to not properly recognize himself as subject. His is a failure of ideological understanding.

CHAPTER 3: Pheneticism Within Literature

3.1 Introduction

I remain convinced that the metaphorical and metaphysical uses of race occupy definitive places in American literature, in the “national” character, and ought to be a major concern of the literary scholarship that tries to know it. (Morrison 63)

I would argue that it is more often the humanities that shine the light on the underlying prejudices that remain from misappropriated scientific discovery, as Quentin Tarantino’s recent film *Django Unchained* did with phrenology¹¹. Some older examples of the artistic criticism of pheneticism (and the American idea that one drop of black blood makes a person of African and not European descent, regardless of interracial relations), however, often fall within the genre of *passing* literature and its critical reception. This form of literature, descended from the Jim Crow laws of America’s deep south, asserts that anyone with one drop of black blood, when identified as any race other than black—typically white—is passing. Much of the literature of the Harlem Renaissance, as well as parallel work from William Faulkner, earlier work from authors such as Mark Twain and Kate Chopin, and later work from the likes of Danzy Senna, falls within this

¹¹ In *Django Unchained*, Calvin Candie (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) saws apart the skull of a recently-deceased slave to exhibit to Django (Jamie Foxx) and Dr. Schultz (Christopher Waltz) a bump that the long-since pseudoscience of phrenology wrongfully claimed made African slaves submissive to their masters.

designation. However, only considering the authors' critiques from within the genre of passing misses much of the intended social commentary. In the application of Compton's definition of pheneticism to traditional passing literature, a much richer examination of racial biases is exposed and shifts the responsibility from the subject being objectified to the one objectifying that subject as 'other.'

3.2 Pheneticism Found Within the Works of African-Descended Authors

My project is an effort to avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served. (Morrison 90)

3.3 Nella Larsen

Irene was inclined to be incredulous. "You mean that you didn't have to explain where you came from? It seems impossible."

Clare cast a glance of repressed amusement across the table at her. "As a matter of fact, I didn't. Though I suppose under any other circumstances I might have had to provide some plausible tale to account for myself. I've a good imagination, so I'm sure I could have done it quite credibly. But it wasn't necessary. There were my aunts, you see, respectable and authentic enough for anything or anybody."

"I see. They were 'passing' too."

"No. They weren't. They were white." (Larsen 1, 16)

In the excerpt above, from Nella Larsen's 1929 novel *Passing*, a critical reader can see the dilemma that is sometimes presented in attempting to differentiate between the two terms, passing and pheneticizing. Is Clare participating in a deception and therefore 'passing' as white, or is she simply phenetically assigned a racial designation by others because of the 'authenticity' of her white aunts? Does her mixed race heritage make her complicit in a society's misunderstanding, or does the responsibility lie in the judgement of others? Recognizing that difficulty does not, however, negate the importance of the term 'passing'. In fact, Larsen is overtly attacking the concept of passing through her application of the term as a title to her work, and in the ongoing dilemma throughout the book where some suggest Clare is a deceiver in allowing others to view her as white. Larsen skillfully portrays the absurdity of placing the responsibility on the subject to identify within a predetermined set of racial parameters designed solely to suppress her limited power as a biracial, light-skinned woman.

This is not to suggest that Clare is not passing in parts of the story. There is an active deception on her part to keep her heritage a secret from her husband, and in doing so, Clare, by Compton's definition, is passing. However, these scenes of passing and deception are made stronger when the reader does not employ the term (and its implications) to scenes in which Clare is misidentified and in which she offers no deception whatsoever. It is the juxtaposition of these responses to Clare's appearance—her husband's response to her deception, and a public response to her 'whiteness', particularly in relation to her paternal aunts—that allows the reader to differentiate between deception and subjection.

Throughout the work the issue of class struggle, through the lens of race and identification, is presented to the reader. Clare, as a white woman, is afforded opportunities and

positions of privilege that her black friends cannot experience. Interestingly, these friends are involved in the Negro Welfare League but seemingly, also understand the position of Clare in enjoying the anonymity of her own race. There is a class struggle in which they are actively participating in the subversion of the structure that holds them subservient, yet they willingly allow Clare to pass, or at times be pheneticized from within her mixed-race heritage in order that she might avoid the class struggle altogether. Ironically, it is the actions of her black friends that reposition Clare as pheneticized black in the mind of her husband, Jack, and lead to her death. The underlying argument being made here by Larsen is that, as a passing or pheneticized white woman, the biracial Clare enjoys a life free of the class struggle experienced by her more obviously black friends, and in accepting and participating in that part of her history and culture that is black, Clare is thrust into subjugated position that overwhelms her position of freedom. The woman, Clare, has changed in no way at all, except in the mind of those, in this case white subjects who hold the social power, who once pheneticized her as white and later pheneticize her as black, thus robbing her of her position of freedom.

In another of Nella Larsen's work, *Quicksand* (1928), the protagonist Helga provides a character of mixed race who serves as the story's phenopolysemic¹². In Chapter 4, during a gruelling train ride to the northern states, the reader is presented with a scene that could be construed as either passing or pheneticizing, or more likely, both. In attempting to get a berth on the train, Helga, an educated teacher with financial means, finds herself rejected by the first conductor due to racial discrimination. It is not necessarily that Helga appears black, but rather that her features in relation to the context of her position—coming from the rear, black-occupied

¹² "A person whose appearance can suggest more than one racial designation." (Compton 25)

cars of the train—allows the conductor based on appearance and context, to pheneticize Helga as black. At a shift change, she approaches the new, more aged conductor who “subjected her to a keen, appraising look and then promised to see what could be done” (Larsen 2, 24).

In neither case does Helga make any effort to announce her race, therefore it could be argued she is hoping to pass through omission. A closer look challenges this perception. The textual evidence suggests that the conductor recognizes Helga’s racial identity, based on the evidence that he charged her “twice the price” (Larsen 2, 24) the going rate for a berth, and that the aging man’s “keen” eye realized the mixed ancestry revealed in her “soft, yet penetrating dark eyes” and curly blue-black hair” (Larsen 2, 2), though the author is not explicit. The passage is somewhat ambiguous, but even if it is argued that the conductor recognizes Helga’s African ancestry, his evaluation contains an element—albeit subtle—of phenetic judgment. His determination, whether she is actively trying to pass or not, is that she can pass. He is willing to take a chance on turning a quick profit based on his evaluation of the woman before him. It is the conductor who determines whether Helga can pass—and therefore will be pheneticized—if he changes the context in which she is viewed by other passengers, therefore labelling her as ‘close enough’ to white to get a berth for the night. In his actions, the conductor determines that by simply changing the context in which Helga, the subject, is viewed, any who would objectify her would pheneticize her as a white woman, for what other reason would she be able to ride within the berth cars of the train?

Further, though Helga’s mother is Danish, upon visiting her relatives in Denmark, the reader is presented with another subtle and difficult section of labelling. Though it might be argued that this example does not portray pheneticism by Compton’s definition, because those

viewing Helga know and understand that her father is of African descent and they are also clearly aware of her mother's heritage. Helga's white heritage, in this instance, goes ignored while Helga is both adorned and displayed as an oddity to be observed—an exotic. For Dawahare, Helga, of course, “resists being objectified... as a means of advancing the social fortunes of the Dahls of Copenhagen” (27), but it is this objectification that demonstrates her Danish family's belief that she is black, and not white, regardless of her mother's history. This labeling, tied to her appearance, is not an act of passing, but I would argue follows more closely to the act of pheneticizing. She is a curiosity amongst white people because they have determined for her that she is not white, despite her mixed-race status. The position here is tied to the miscegenation laws that arose from the abolition of slavery and the restructuring that occurred afterwards. Helga's relatives have determined that she must fit within a binary of race, despite her mixed heritage, or as Dawahare puts it:

Crucially, at the root of Helga's ambivalence about her black identity is a social system predicated on multilevel class inequalities. Her recurring sense of entrapment is certainly well founded, since the social quicksand into which she sinks is that of a Jim Crow America whose class, color, and gender lines extend from South to North. (29)

Regardless of whether we call this particular example pheneticizing or perhaps merely labelling, Helga's positioning by her relatives is, without dispute, tied to a structure of power built upon the false notion of race.

The text does support that Helga can pass as white. Fru Dahl's argument that Helga's “mother was a fool” and that had she brought Helga to Denmark when she was a child the

situation “would have been different” (Larsen 2, 72) seems to indicate a belief that Helga’s complexion is fair enough to pass. It is her upbringing and connections to black America that cause Helga to be labeled as black. The assertion by the character Dahl is that it is only the class structure of Helga’s blackness that prevents her from enjoying a privileged position. Helga even sees herself through this same filter. Her family’s decision to continually link her to her father’s heritage and its inherent class struggle, and not her mother’s equally justifiable heritage, is a phenetic choice based on learned prejudices of the ruling ideology.

3.4 Danzy Senna

In a similar fashion, there is little doubt that Danzy Senna’s novel *Caucasia* (1998) contains scenes of passing, but like Larson, she vacillates between passing and pheneticism, offering both as a critique of a hypocritical societal position. Passing is a major trope within the work, detailing the white-looking, biracial Birdie’s transition from black to white and back to black again.

With pressure from her mother, who is on the run from the FBI, Birdie even adopts the name “Jesse” to go along with her feigned Jewish ancestry. Containing detailed acts of intentional deception, the novel covers several years of Birdie ‘passing’ as something other than her mixed African-white heritage. The novel, however, also includes scenes of phenetic identification. Attempting to enrol her daughters in school, and before going on the lam with her youngest daughter, Sandy discovers that Birdie will be sent to a “school in Dorchester” and Cole will be bussed to “South Boston” (Senna 37). For the purposes of “dahvesetty” (Senna 37), the sisters have been assigned to two different schools, by a member of the state apparatus, for no

reason other than a phenetic assumption that the two are of separate races. It is not coincidental in any way that the pheneticizer is an agent of the state.

In established forms of critique, this scene would be referred to as one of ‘passing.’ Birdie is seen as passing for white, despite standing beside her black sister and despite the fact that her mother has done nothing to indicate a race or deception for either girl. The clerk at City Hall simply “took one look at Cole and [Birdie] and assigned [them] to different districts” (Senna 37). This is not a case of passing and should not be considered in that light. There is no active attempt to deceive on the part of Birdie or her mother. It is more appropriate to identify this passage as a case of pheneticizing and in doing so, the reader is afforded the stronger critique intended by the author. The state is taking an active role in identifying the race of a child for the purposes of maintaining the structure. Throughout the work, “race unevenly arranges [Birdie’s] domestic relations,” and “race operates within larger social inequalities made vivid” (Elam 753) to the reader through Birdie’s experience. In effect, the author works to demonstrate how Birdie’s position within the structure, and the guarantees afforded her, change depending on whether she is pheneticized as a black or as a white subject.

As “it is on the physical body that we expect racial identity to make itself visible” (Boudreau 60), the clerk makes a judgement about each girl based only on the visual evidence and her own interpretation of the facts presented in the skin pigmentation she sees. As the scene’s “phenopolysemic” character (Compton 25), Birdie can be viewed as having connections to one of multiple races, but the clerk’s assumption that she can only be of white descent shifts the scene from one of passing to one of pheneticizing. Although this hints at and foreshadows Birdie’s later ability to pass as ‘Jesse,’ there is an important differentiation between the two.

Neither Birdie nor her mother, in this situation, attempt to present the girl in any veiled manner. The societal critique Senna is making in this scene of phenetic classification is therefore separated from the critique found within scenes of passing. *Caucasia*'s episodes of passing generally demonstrate a need or desire to fit in, but this scene at City Hall, in placing the emphasis on the viewer rather than the viewed, mocks the prejudice of 1970's New England culture and may help to partially explain Sandy's later desire for her daughter to pass as white.

This scene of pheneticizing is repeated when Cole and Birdie attend the Nkrumah School. The secretary, an agent of the ideological state apparatus, assumes that only Cole, who is more obviously of African heritage, will be a student at the school. Again, Senna demonstrates a systemic prejudice based on appearance, though this time through the eyes of a black administrator. That prejudice is then compounded in the classroom, when students assume Birdie is "Rican" or "white" and question her presence in what is "supposed to be a black school" (Senna 43) which demonstrates, in fictional form, the position of the school as an ideological state apparatus carefully positioned to uphold the structure. Birdie's enrolment at the school should reveal her ancestry, yet the "students at school insist on some kind of validated proof of her blackness" (Boudreau 62). That the author transfers the act of pheneticizing from adult characters to children demonstrates a broader critique of the culture of which she writes. Children tend to be more accepting of differences than adults yet, at the Nkrumah School, attitudes of visual classification permeate even the younger generation because they are ingrained within the dominant ideology. To suggest these are scenes of 'passing' does a disservice to the criticism intended by the author.

While the work is not fully biographical, much of Birdie's experience mirrors Senna's own. She was born to a white mother and black father whose marriage, according to a 2009 interview, "was a profound failure... a romantic and highly symbolized union of an interracial couple, two writers who met and wed at the cusp of the Civil Rights Movement" (Van Devin). This meant that Danzy was raised by her mom "in a kind of bohemian artsy household in Boston:" (Van Devin) and didn't get to know her father, or his African heritage (or American south heritage) until she was an adult. This reality, and her own ambiguous appearance as a biracial person who has certainly been pheneticized throughout her life, comes through in *Caucasia*, right down to the father's strong notions of race, the Bostonian upbringing in a WASP household, and the manner in which so many adults wish to place a racial label on the subject of Birdie. Though Michelle Elam wants to focus on scenes of passing and *Caucasia* as a novel from the passing genre, she correctly articulates that the "illusoriness of race [in the novel] is a red herring, and that to treat race as a philosophical dead-end is itself a game of sophistry" (Elam 752). Senna, in her interview, says it this way:

My father definitely shaped my view of race. He saw it everywhere—and I, in turn, came to see it everywhere. He also gave me a great sense of racial irony, racial humor—I understood, implicitly, that to laugh at a situation, to see the absurdity in it, is to survive it. (Van Devin)

Caucasia is about the absurdity of race. The absurdity that Birdie, like Senna, can be effectively pheneticized into a dichotomy of race, and the absurdity that it is important that she is.

3.5 James Weldon Johnson

In James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912/1927), the reader is once again confronted with a traditional representation of 'passing'. In the closing pages, the narrator commits to keeping his "secret" to protect his children so that the "brand" of black will not be "placed upon them" (Johnson 510). Though it can be argued that the speaker has honourable intentions and that throughout the book he "demonstrates ambivalence about whiteness as well as blackness" (Pfeiffer 403), in the end, his is clearly an active act of omission to deceive. Again, however, alongside the struggle to understand the cultural need for 'passing,' Johnson presents moments of visual codification.

Towards the story's beginning, the school Principal (again, the author in this case also employs an agent of the ideological state apparatus) announces his desire to have all the "white scholars" stand in class. Identifying as white and standing with the other white scholars, the titular Ex-Colored Man is told by his teacher to "sit down for the present and rise with the others" (Johnson 400). This placement of a mixed race child alongside the black students, leaves the speaker "dazed" and "in a kind of stupor" (Johnson 400) because he has never previously considered his African ancestry. Although the choice to stand with the white students was active, it is not a deception. At this point in his life, the Ex-Colored Man has only ever identified as white. The idea that he might be something other than white has simply not crossed his mind. Similarly, harkening back to the 'one-drop' rules of segregation, the school administration has never considered him as anything other than black, because that is what the structure calls for. As with Senna's *Caucasia*, pheneticizing in this scene also trickles down to the school-aged children. With calls of "you're a nigger too" from the white students and "we knew he was

coloured” (Johnson 401) from the blacks, the children, in placing a label on the narrator that he does not choose for himself, demonstrate the power of the ideological apparatus. This pattern speaks to the generational transcendence of the attitude found within the desire—by some—for visual racial identification. In the case of the Ex-Colored Man, who has skin of “ivory whiteness” (Johnson 401), pheneticizing is not based on skin pigmentation, yet there are clearly signs which betray his ancestry to the other children.

To refer to this scene through the lens of the older term ‘passing’ prevents recognition of the critique found within the narrative. Although the Ex-Colored Man appears to be white, he must hold some phenopolysemic characteristics revealing his truth to others, even children. Based on those clues, coupled with his mother’s skin tone and heritage, he is therefore labelled ‘black’ and discriminated against as a result. For Pfeiffer, “positioning its title character at the intersection of the white and black worlds, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* continually challenges the binary of America’s racial ideology” (404): despite the fact that no such binary, scientifically speaking, exists. The complexity of a character who identifies in innocence as white, and yet who is categorized by American laws of the repressive state apparatus as black, and then having that character actively labelled by others in adherence to a policy “stricter than the Nazi’s anti-Semitic, anti-miscegenation laws” (Compton 21), challenges the logic of those American laws in ways that passing alone cannot accomplish. Pheneticizing within *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* correctly identifies the label as having been forced upon the person being viewed, rather than chosen by him.

3.6 Pheneticism Found Within the Works of White Authors

3.7 William Faulkner

The District Attorney relies upon a Gothic encoding of what he understands to be the divide between black and white, speaking the language of early-American writers for whom blackness, for the most part, signifies evil and the Devil's work, and whiteness, usually, signifies purity and religious illumination. The lawyer's re-presentation of early-American Gothic rhetoric as a modern discourse of blood not only conflates the moral with the racial, but also, as spoken by the voice of law and education, authorizes such a discourse as learned, reasoned, and natural. Staged as a onesided conversation between two Ivy League-educated white men, Stevens's monologue represents how the Gothic infiltrates modern racial thought, so much so that even Faulkner's Harvard-educated, state-representative lawman speaks of mixed-race in terms of a mythic—one might say eugenic—battle between good and evil blood pools. The silence of the emergent professor, who never interrupts, signals that he accepts, or at least remains mesmerized by, Stevens's fantastic narrative as a truth. (Watson 190, reviewing *Light in August*)

In Faulkner's work, the character of Joe Christmas is a light-skinned orphan, but it is in his assumption of an African ancestry that Joe becomes uncomfortable with himself. There is no way for Joe to know what his history is, but he has been continually pheneticized by the religious

elite in his life—acting as the ideological state apparatus—as black, because he is a little bit darker than the other boys in the orphanage. As an adult, Joe moves freely between the black and white worlds he encounters in order to suit his needs at the time, but believing himself to be black and appearing white, he is never comfortable in either role.

One might argue that, as Joe believes himself to be black and portrays himself, at times, as white, that he is indeed committing an act of deception and is therefore passing, making *Light in August* a passing novel. Joe's assumptions of his ethnicity, however, are based upon the earlier childhood phenetic labelling of Miss Atkin's (as head of the white orphanage, another agent of the ideological state apparatus) and Joe's adoptive father, Mr. McEachern. His internal positioning as a black man is dependent upon the earlier pheneticism of adults who labelled him so, according to the structure and ideology of 1930's southern America.

Faulkner intentionally leaves Joe's heritage ambiguous—an ambiguity that “colors the way that Jefferson's townspeople understand themselves as occupying a normative whiteness” (Watson, 191)—which further removes the novel from being one of passing, to one that requires another filter through which it can be considered. According to Adam Long, “Joe Christmas's racial identity is created by the gaze of the other, and he and his blood are blackened, a blackening that is ultimately resolved by racial violence.” (145). The gaze here is pheneticism, which allows the reader to critique the time—a time in which segregation is thwarted by Joe's easy transcendence of both black and white communities—and in which it is necessary to fully grasp the depth to which the author is criticizing the southern Jim Crow culture. That pheneticism, in this case, leads to violence against the pheneticized subject, even in a fictional account, adds to the argument that the coloured subject is not truly free, for in the subjectification

as coloured ‘other’, it is the guarantee of safety and security that is taken from the subject, though Joe Christmas has never truly possessed either of those at any time.

3.8 Kate Chopin

In Kate Chopin’s short-story *Desiree’s Baby*, the reader is presented with a more complex form of literary pheneticism. The story’s protagonist, Desiree, is unaware of her racial ancestry, as she was adopted as an orphaned infant and raised white. Her brown hair, grey eyes, light skin, proper upbringing, and marriage to a slave owner gives little pause for anyone to suspect that she is of African heritage, until her baby at around three months of age takes on the skin tones of a “quadroon¹³” (Chopin 12). It is at this point in the story that Desiree’s husband, Armand, pheneticizes his previously ‘white’ wife as black, almost immediately exiling her from the plantation and his life. He has determined that she—not based upon her own appearance or any known heritage, but based on the appearance of her offspring—is black, and in being black, a deceiver who has discredited his good name. His is a phenetically-fuelled prejudice based on absolutely no deception, as neither Desiree nor Armand could have ever known her true heritage, which happens to not be African. In the closing lines of the tale, Chopin skillfully reveals that it is Armand—not Desiree—who is of mixed African heritage, creating a very different look at the racial critique intended in the literature.

While *Desiree’s Baby* is most-often considered passing literature, there is no one in the story who is actively deceiving any other character, because neither of the two main characters, Desiree and Armand, are aware of their ancestry. It is therefore erroneous to refer to the piece as

¹³ A child with one-quarter African blood.

passing literature unless we maintain the position that the responsibility for racial identity lies with the subject being objectified, even when that subject is fully unaware of their heritage. It is in cases such as this that pheneticism makes the stronger argument intended by the author.

Armand, believing he is white and that the appearance of his baby is at least partially black, incorrectly deduces and therefore pheneticizes Desiree as black. Note that, in determining that his wife is black, he immediately displaces her from the plantation, tying both her perceived blackness and his pheneticization of that perceived blackness to the class struggle argued by Althusser. To be in the landowner's house, other than as a servant, is a position of privilege, which in the mind of Armand, in its relation to the structure and ruling ideology, cannot be held by a person of colour even if that person does not have the appearance of colour and even if that person is in no way aware of their personal heritage. The responsibility for this labelling can only be placed with Armand, who as landowner represents the structure, for how can Desiree be responsible for a heritage of which she is completely unaware?

This is a point Chopin insists upon in the closing lines, but it is a point which is completely negated if the reader suggests that Desiree is passing. If Desiree is passing, then she is perpetrating a deception upon the landowner and is therefore untrustworthy as a character in relation to her spouse. None of this, however, is true, as there is no deception. This is furthered by the author in that all of the presented evidence points to Desiree being white, therefore she cannot be passing as white. The only character in the story whose heritage allows for passing is Armand, but as he is also fully unaware that his own mother was black and as he is a wealthy landowner, he neither passes nor is he pheneticized. All of this criticism is missed, or at best it is glossed over, if we place Chopin's story within the genre of passing literature. By placing the

criticism upon the objectifier rather than the subject, we can more fully explore the intended critique.

3.7 Mark Twain

It was in 1894, while the American race laws of reconstruction were still very much in the stages of early adoption and implementation, that Twain wrote *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, a fictional account of a white-looking slave who switches her white-looking baby with the master's recognized-as-white baby. *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, perhaps more than the previously mentioned works, certainly requires more than the concept of passing for Twain's readership to fully appreciate the criticism intended.

In this book, one of Twain's lesser-known works, the slave girl, Roxy, swaps her light-skinned baby, Chambers, with Tom, the similar-in-appearance son of her master. Throughout the book, Tom, born into white wealth but raised as a black slave, is pheneticized by all of the townsfolk, including his own father as a black child of slavery, while the actual black son, Chambers, is being raised and pheneticized by everyone, including Tom, as a white son of privilege.

The story does include one episode of passing, but keeping the racial critique fully intact, Twain uses a scenario of gender passing in which Chambers, believing he is Tom (the privileged white boy), and having taken on all of the characteristics of a white, upper class, spoiled child, dresses as a woman so that he can rob from people's homes without being detected, while his family believes he is out of town. Twain is careful, in fact, to offer no scenes of racial passing, except for those in which neither character being phenetically labeled with a race they were not

assigned at birth, is aware that they are posing outside of those racial identifications. It is only Roxy, and later the titular lawyer, Pudd'nhead Wilson through the 'new' technology of fingerprints, who are aware of the bassinet switch. It would therefore be completely incorrect to refer to this as passing literature. Neither pheneticized character is aware, so neither engages in active deception. It is clear that Twain is attacking Jim Crow orthodoxy and that attack cannot be completely realized if the onus for identification is placed on the individuals being wrongfully identified outside of their birth-race.

In the closing moments of this story, Chambers, now both a known thief and known black, is sent "down the river," (Twain 139) the very fate Roxy had wished to avoid and a fate he would not have suffered as a white man. It is important to note that, had Chambers remained in the eyes of his kin a white man, a lesser punishment would have been expected, but as a black man—despite the fact that neither he nor anyone else knew that he was black—who is also a thief, must be sent "down the river," which suggests a future of harsher treatment experienced by slaves in the states south of Missouri. It is also important to see that it is the apparatus of the court who determines, based on the fingerprint evidence of a white lawyer of little reputation, who is black and who is white. It is the apparatus and the agents of ideology who enact the punishment upon Chambers, thus upholding the structure and the class struggle associated with blackness. That Twain has the townspeople so easily shift their view of this man Chambers and his counterpart Tom, whom they have previously mistreated as a slave, depicts clearly that this is a book best critiqued through the lens of phenetic theory, not within the genre of passing literature. As Compton would put it:

... the re-reading of these “passing narratives,” armed with the notion of pheneticization, provides more subtle details of the experiences discerned in each case. Less unfair suspicion is put upon these racialized individuals, and their agency is more apparent in the language describing the events of their lives. (55)

Leslie Fiedler notes that, in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, “the figure of the mulatto... exposes anxieties over race and social control” (926). It is the social control of which, for this work, we are interested. Twain goes out of his way to show the townspeople as ignorant to the proper identities of Tom and Chambers, and he leaves it to the courts to decide ethnicity, race, and the severe punishment for a biracial man only days earlier revered as white. Twain, in one of his final journal entries, said that “in the skin of every human contains a slave” (McCullough 1). This is the truth of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Every character, and therefore by extension, every reader, is a slave to the structure that determines value, worth, and position based on something as anachronistic as multiple races within the human species, unless that reader resists the structure and their own position of subject. Even if these races existed, Twain demonstrates the incredulous nature of the one-drop laws and the notion that Roxy's child is easily identifiable as black.

Phillip Brian Harper, in “Passing for What? Racial Masquerade and the Demands of Upward Mobility” questions the political significance of ‘passing’. Wayde Compton challenges the modern definitions of the term and provides the critical reader a new tool with which he can critique literature. Harper suggests, “while racial passing does [challenge the very notion of the visual as an epistemological guarantee]... this is effectively all that it does” (Harper 382). The

idea that passing does anything more than challenge visual identities effectively explains why the notion of pheneticizing is needed. Passing challenges historical discrimination, prejudiced narratives, and bigoted pre-determinism. Phenetics places the responsibility for those prejudices and acts of discrimination where it belongs: on the shoulders of the viewer, not the subject being viewed, and recognizes the viewer's complicitness to the structure. Alberti argues that:

"Newcomers to the United States quickly discover that whatever the ethnic and class complexity of U.S. society, the bipolar racial logic of dark and light functions as a key component of identity formation, both between identified groups and within them" (932). Essentially, within the Americanized continent, there has been an allowance for the further fracturing of the proletariat class into racially divided subsections.

There is a clear difference between passing and pheneticizing, though there are cases that could be argued for either, neither, or both. Since "the word 'passing' is rooted in deception" (Compton 23) the reader must apply the new term to situations "when deception is not being committed during an act of racial misperception" (Compton 23). Within literature typically regarded as fitting the 'passing' genre, moments of pheneticizing can be discovered and analyzed to better understand an author's intentions. Further, in works not typically associated with passing stories, moments of phenetic prejudice can be found and studied to elevate and enhance the critique of said work. Wayde Compton's introduction of pheneticizing is built upon real-world examples more than works of literature, but as a critical theory to provide greater analysis, the literary world would be well served by embracing the concept and adding it to the arsenal of tools with which we read texts.

Conclusion

4.1 Extensions of Phenetic Theory

Although this work is focused on Critical Race Theory and its relationship to Marxist-Leninist structuralism, particularly within the false-dichotomy of black and white race relations, there are other branches of critical theory and philosophy which lend themselves naturally to the extension of the concept of pheneticism as a cultural critique of human interaction. Specifically, there would seem to be natural extensions of phenetic theory into areas of Queer Theory and Disability Identity Theory, as well as within works of literature that do not address the African experience.

4.2 Closing Thoughts

The role of the repressive State apparatus, insofar as it is a repressive apparatus, consists essentially in securing by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production which are in the last resort relations of exploitation. Not only does the State apparatus contribute generously to its own reproduction (the capitalist State contains political dynasties, military dynasties, etc.), but also and above all, the State apparatus secures by repression (from the most brutal physical force, via mere administrative commands and interdictions, to open and tacit censorship) the political conditions for the action of the Ideological State Apparatuses. (Althusser 1, 23-24)

If we accept that there is an overarching structure with the purpose of maintaining positions of power for the elite through the accumulation of wealth and the ongoing reproduction of the labour force upon which the elite can draw inexpensive workers, and if we recognize that the Euro-American slave trade was a direct response to that structure, it becomes easier to understand the ideological necessity of racially-charged laws, policies, and beliefs that have permeated North-American culture since American reconstruction. Racial segregation and discrimination have been and continue to be structural ploys to maintain a workforce made up of happy, or at the very least, pacified, peasants.

Even into the 21st century, we still have agents of the state employing scientifically outdated, but highly prejudicial racially based policies. In Etobicoke, Ontario, a Principal has just been transferred—not fired, suspended, or disciplined in any significant manner—for creating a list of students she had personally pheneticized as having African heritage (Ahma). This is a significant micro-example of what is taking place on a much larger scale. The students in question were phehenticized as African or Caribbean, without the opportunity to self-identify. They were pheneticized by an agent of the state. The students were pheneticized based on the false notion that, as students of colour, they would have to work “twice as hard” (Ahma) to achieve the same grades as their white peers, despite the fact that their current averages do not validate that claim. While the suggestion that this seemingly rogue Principal’s actions in one school, in one city, in Canada, is somehow representative of the whole might seem like a non sequitur, I would suggest that it’s actually quite the opposite, even validating some of Althusser’s more criticized claims.

The strength of Althusser's extension of Marxist-Leninist thought is the depth and breadth to which he assigns the structure. As Axel Honneth suggests:

“... Althusser extends the object-domain of structuralism beyond the domain of cultural symbolic media of human sociality.... He now imputes the forms of organization of social systems themselves to deep structures.”

(Elliott , 75)

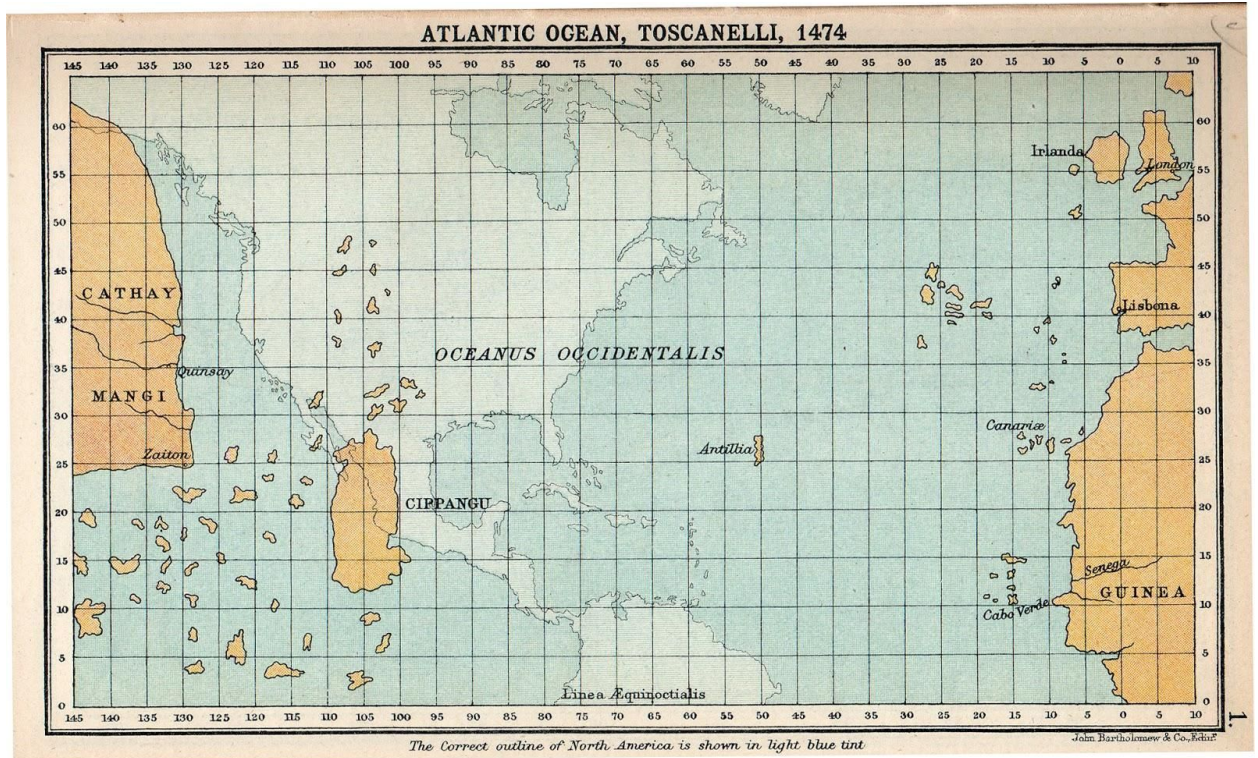
When we see police injuring or killing individuals of colour, we often chalk it up to a systemic problem that failed to properly screen these individuals when they applied to the police force, but not necessarily a system that teaches such behavior. When we hear the current President throw out late night, racially-charged insults, we ascribe the behavior to the man, not necessarily the office. When we see a Principal categorize her students with racial labels that she has assigned to them, it can be seen as one, misguided administrator, not understanding the impact, and her actions do not necessarily implicate the system. However, the depth of the structure is not found in the actions of the individual, but rather in the response of those surrounding that individual to their actions. When black-killing police are found innocent in the courts, despite video evidence that would suggest otherwise, that demonstrates the depth of the structure. When an openly racist President is not only elected, but celebrated by many for his racist tendencies, that demonstrates the breadth of the structure. When a Principal is simply transferred, despite insulting multiple cultural groups with her actions, that demonstrates the prevalence of the structure.

When Shane Book is arrested and interrogated for walking on a bridge—and if we were honest, we would say he was actually arrested for being racially ambiguous—it shows the role

pheneticism plays within the structure to determine who is dangerous, less than, and subject to detainment without cause. I know that I am subject to the structure and the ideologies of that structure, but I also believe that I have greater liberty within the structure. I'm white. No one is pheneticizing me any other way.

Appendices

1)



Border Crossings

Shane Book

Shane Book is New York Times Fellow in Poetry at New York University. His recent poems are included in *Hammer and Tongue*, just published by Smoking Lung. An earlier version of this piece appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen*.

INDIAN

A day and a half's drive out of Victoria, on the outskirts of Winnipeg, the cop pulled me over. School was done and I was headed home. The prairie was brown and empty. It was raining. It was no place I wanted to be.

While I waited for him to get out of the car, I caught my face in the rear view mirror. My brown skin looked yellow in the dull morning light. I was tired, but on target to make Grandpa's by lunchtime. I hadn't slept in two days.

I rolled down the window. His face was flat, high cheekbones and narrow eyes, like someone from eastern Europe. He asked where I was headed and I told him. He nodded, said the traffic made it hard to hear, he was going around to the passenger side. I reached over and unlocked the door.

The van was jammed full with stuff from school. He asked what all the boxes were and where I was coming from and what I did for a living. I explained about graduating and going to Ottawa for the summer. He nodded.

When I told him the boxes were mostly books, he asked if I was a smoker. I asked if he meant cigarettes and he said no, he meant pot, had I ever smoked weed?

GEIST 34

I almost said, hey, what do you think, I just spent four years in B.C., but instead I said I hadn't smoked pot in a long time.

He opened the glove compartment, moved the papers and maps around. He asked my name again and where I was going and I told him again and he nodded and then said was I sure I didn't have any drugs? I said I was very sure and he said that was good.

Just as he was shutting the passenger door, he said if I wanted the North End of Winnipeg, he could point me in the right direction. I asked him what the North End was and he said that was where all the Indians lived. I shook my head no and he smiled and told me to have a good day.

When I got to my grandparents' house I told them what happened. We were sitting around the kitchen table with my aunt and uncle. This was the white side of my family.

My aunt shook her head and said she couldn't imagine why they would pull me over. She said if I wanted, she would call her friend who worked at city hall.

My uncle stroked his beard and said it might have been the B.C. plates.

Grandma got up from the table to get me another slice of bread.

Grandpa was the only one who picked up on the Indian reference. He said there'd been stories lately in the paper about gangs running drugs through Winnipeg, the police were cracking down on that kind of thing. He said the cop probably thought I was in a gang.

The table went quiet for a time after he said that.

PERUVIAN

Me and my friend Andrew were driving the big bridge from Windsor to Detroit. The sky was grey, the air muggy. It was the middle of August. The two of us were in the front, between us was a stack of racing slicks, behind that was the motorcycle, and in the very back, lying on the bed, were two guys Andrew had brought along to share gas money. Andrew was driving. It was his van.

When we got to customs, the guy in the booth asked how many were in the van, and where we were headed.

He struck his head in and looked around. He had dark hair and dark eyes like someone from a mobster movie. He asked where we were from.

When I said Peru he told us to pull off into the inspection bay and come inside.

The four of us walked into the inspection office and stood at the counter while the customs officer wrote

down our reasons for coming and how long we planned on staying in the U.S.A. Then he waved for the other three to go and wait in the van.

When they were gone, he started calling me "son," asking if I had any relatives in Peru, if I had a criminal record.

I explained it was just an accident, my parents were Canadians who happened to be working there at the time.

He asked again if I had a criminal record and this time he said if he punched my name into the computer and it showed anything, there was going to be big trouble.

I wasn't trying to be smart when I asked him if that included parking violations. I'd gotten one a few years back in Virginia and didn't want to screw up the road trip for the other three guys.

He told me to stop being smart.

HISPANIC

My girlfriend Larisa and I were driving from Vancouver Island to Bellingham, Washington. Earlier that day we'd been to a wedding where she'd had too much to drink. On the ferry over she'd been sick in the washroom and now she was sleeping it off in the passenger seat.

When we got to the border crossing at the Peace Arch, the customs officer asked our purpose for traveling to the States and how long we planned to stay there. In the dim light his red hair stood out against his blue uniform. He reminded me of the big Irish kid who used to steal lunches back in grade two.

I explained we were going to visit her friend for a few days and he nodded. Then he asked us if we were related, like brother and sister or something. I told him no, and he asked me to wake her up. I said she was sick, but he said he didn't care.

Larisa's eyes were half-closed when she leaned over to talk to the customs officer. I had to hold her up. He



THE COP ASKED
WHY I'D COME
ALL THE WAY
FROM CANADA TO
GO SIGHTSEEING
AT ONE IN THE
MORNING

asked her if we were related, and she said like how, and he said like brother and sister or something. She said she didn't know what he was talking about and fell back against the passenger window.

The customs officer asked if I'd ever picked fruit or had any family members who worked in the orchards. I said no. He waved us through.

After I rolled up my window and we started moving again, Larisa said it was weird the guy would think we were related since her mother was Chinese and mine wasn't.

I said I was confused about the fruit picker question. She said a lot of fruit pickers in Washington were Hispanic so they must have thought we were too.

SAMOAN

This really happened. Me and Brad were driving down from Victoria to New Mexico. Fifty miles east of Seattle, just coming through the Chinook Pass on the 1-90 headed for Yakima, a state trooper stopped us.

He came around to the passenger's side, opened the door and asked if we knew how fast we were going. I nodded.

He smiled, said he hated it when speeders were honest, and asked where we were from. When he heard Victoria, he told a story of how he went there on his honeymoon and fished steelhead and thought it was great.

Nodding to me, he asked where we were from, originally. Before I could answer he said if he had to guess, he'd say Samoa. He'd served in the navy, spent time in that part of the world, said Samoans were trustworthy, peace-loving people.

I lied, told him I was born there.

His eyes lit up. He said since I was a Samoan who told the truth about speeding he'd have to let me go this time.

Before he shut the door he reminded us we were in America now, where there were speed limits, as opposed to Canada where everyone drove any speed they wanted.

MEXICAN

Sherman and I had just passed through the fruit inspection station at the Arizona-California border. We aimed to make Barstow by nightfall.

Three days before, at a used car lot in Booneville, Missouri, we'd traded Sherm's van and fifteen hundred bucks for a newer one. The newer van had captain's

chairs, a cigarette lighter and a speedometer that worked. We were cruising now.

We were approaching an overpass when I looked in my side mirror and saw a Suzuki Tracker with flashing roof lights come up out of a sand pit in the median.

I was sweating and Sherman looked worried.

The dealer'd given us a sticker for the window that said we were allowed to drive the van in the state of Missouri for twenty-four hours. That was three days ago. We were two Canadians driving in the U.S. without insurance and without plates. We were in another part of the world now.

The cop had on those mirrored shades you see on TV shows about the California Highway Patrol. He was blond. He had a square jaw. He was straight out of a German propaganda poster from the thirties.

He asked for ID. He wanted to know how I could be Canadian if I was born in Peru. I explained the thing about my parents working there and he nodded.

He poked his head in the window. The van was stuffed with camp gear, tools, a surfboard and two motorcycles. He didn't say anything about the surfboard or the motorcycles but he asked if I had ever transported aliens across the border into California. I said no. Then he asked if I had relatives in Mexico. I shook my head.

When he tapped his hand on the door, the big gold ring on his middle finger made a pinging sound. He looked up at the sky and back at us, told us to obey the speed limit and keep our lights on at all times. Before letting us go, he asked me once more about being Mexican.

He didn't mention anything about driving around without a licence plate.

ARAB

I was standing in the middle of the Golden Gate bridge smoking contraband Cuban cigars, when I noticed the security camera. If it had been light out, I might've seen the camera sooner, but it was 1:00 a.m. and

misty. I took a drag off my cigar and watched the smoke mingle with the murky night air.

That was when the cop car came roaring up the bridge, sirens blaring.

The cop jumped out with his gun drawn, screaming for me to put my hands where he could see them. He was

LARISA

SAID

IT WAS

WEIRD

THE GUY

WOULD

THINK WE

WERE

RELATED

SINCE HER

MOTHER

WAS

CHINESE

AND MINE

WASN'T

fat and bald, with a flat nose and puffy face. He said I was under arrest and read me my rights, just like on TV.

I started to ask if I should drop the cigar, but he shouted for me to get down on my knees, put my hands on my head and shut up. Then he cuffed me and yanked the cigar from my mouth.

He asked what I was doing on the bridge. I explained I was a tourist from Canada. The cop asked why I'd come all the way from Canada to go sightseeing at one in the morning. I said I was on a tight schedule.

He asked how I got onto the bridge and I told him I walked. Then he asked if I'd seen the No Walking on the Bridge at Night sign and I shook my head. Then he said how about the No Walking on the Freeway sign. I said I hadn't seen that one, either.

He said they must grow them pretty stupid up in Canada for me not to realize the bridge was off limits to pedestrians at night, what with the barbed-wire gate blocking the sidewalk and all. I said I'd missed that, too.

He said that was funny, because the boys at the station had watched on the security camera while I climbed the wire. I didn't say much after that.

When I got to the station, I was put in a room with a hard wooden bench and a table, while the cop who arrested me took my licence to another room. The station was an aluminum trailer on concrete blocks. It reminded me of the warmup huts next to the outdoor rinks in Ottawa.

Two new cops came in and asked questions. They both had blond hair and blue eyes. They weren't fat like the first cop. They could have been surfers.

The woman was nicer than the man. She said she just wanted to know the reason I was on the bridge. The man interrupted her from time to time by shouting that I was a dumb-ass punk up to no good.

In between, I could hear the fat cop on the phone in the other room, processing my licence, trying to pronounce "Ontario" to someone on the other line.

Then he came back into the room, pointed at me and asked if I had any affiliation with the Middle East. I asked like how, and he said like family, like religious or political organizations. I asked if he was asking me if I

was Muslim and he said shut up and let the police ask the questions.

I told him I was baptized Catholic and confirmed United. He said sure I was, and did I happen to speak any Arabic? I said no. He said he wanted the plain truth. I said OK, if you really want the truth I'll give it to you.

I started in about my father being Dutch - Irish - German - American from Manitoba, that we could trace his family back to the *Megflower*, about my mother coming from Trinidad and her family being mostly black, except for one of her grandparents being Chinese and someone back there, Spanish with some Caribe Indian mixed in because that's the way Trinidad is, how we couldn't trace it too far back because they didn't keep very good records from slavery days, and then I got onto why my birth certificate said Peruvian, my parents working there when my mom got pregnant, told about moving to Africa when I was twelve, living there a while before coming back to Ottawa where I

went to high school, before going to Victoria for university—the place I was heading for now to do my first year, the little road trip through the States a short break before school began, and finally how passing through San Francisco that evening, I thought I'd check out the bridge, wanting to see it up close when there was no one else around, which was why I walked, which was the whole reason I got into this jam in the first place.

The first cop walked out of the room with the other two and closed the door. I heard them talking in the hall and finally the woman cop came in and undid the handcuffs. My wrists were pretty sore by then. She said I was lucky they were going to let me go with a warning for trespassing.

The next day, as I drove north up the 1-5 toward Vancouver, I heard a radio report that said San Francisco police were becoming concerned about possible terrorist attacks on Bay Area landmarks.

I lit a cigar and I let my mouth fill with smoke as I drove, watching the skyline of San Francisco recede in my rear-view mirror. I was one Canadian, heading for home.

I knew this was supposed to make me feel a certain way, but at that moment, I couldn't recall what that feeling was.



THE STATE
TROOPER SAID
THEY MUST
GROW THEM
PRETTY STUPID
UP IN
CANADA

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